

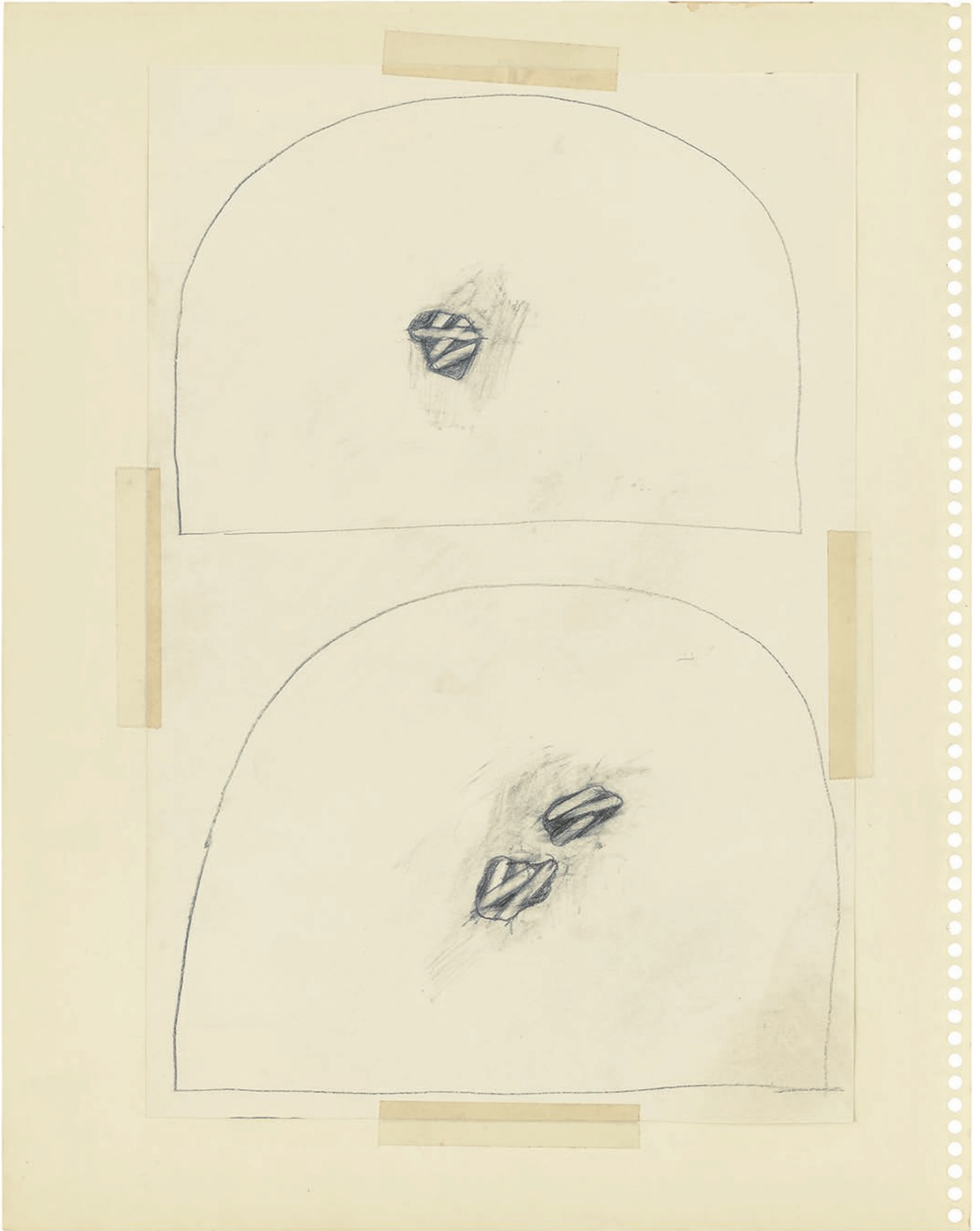
# Ken Price Drawings

Essay by Jean-Pierre Criqui

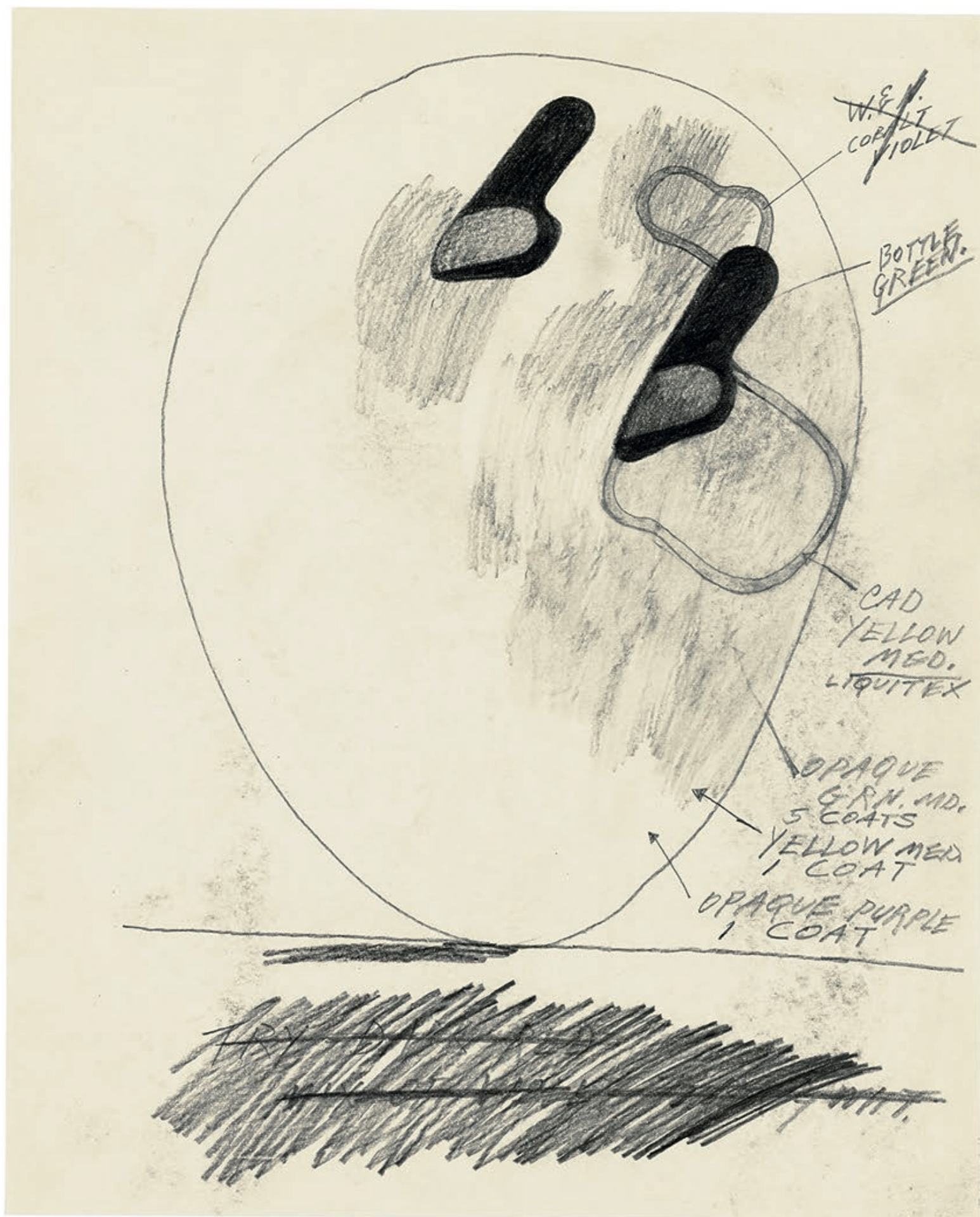
Matthew Marks Gallery





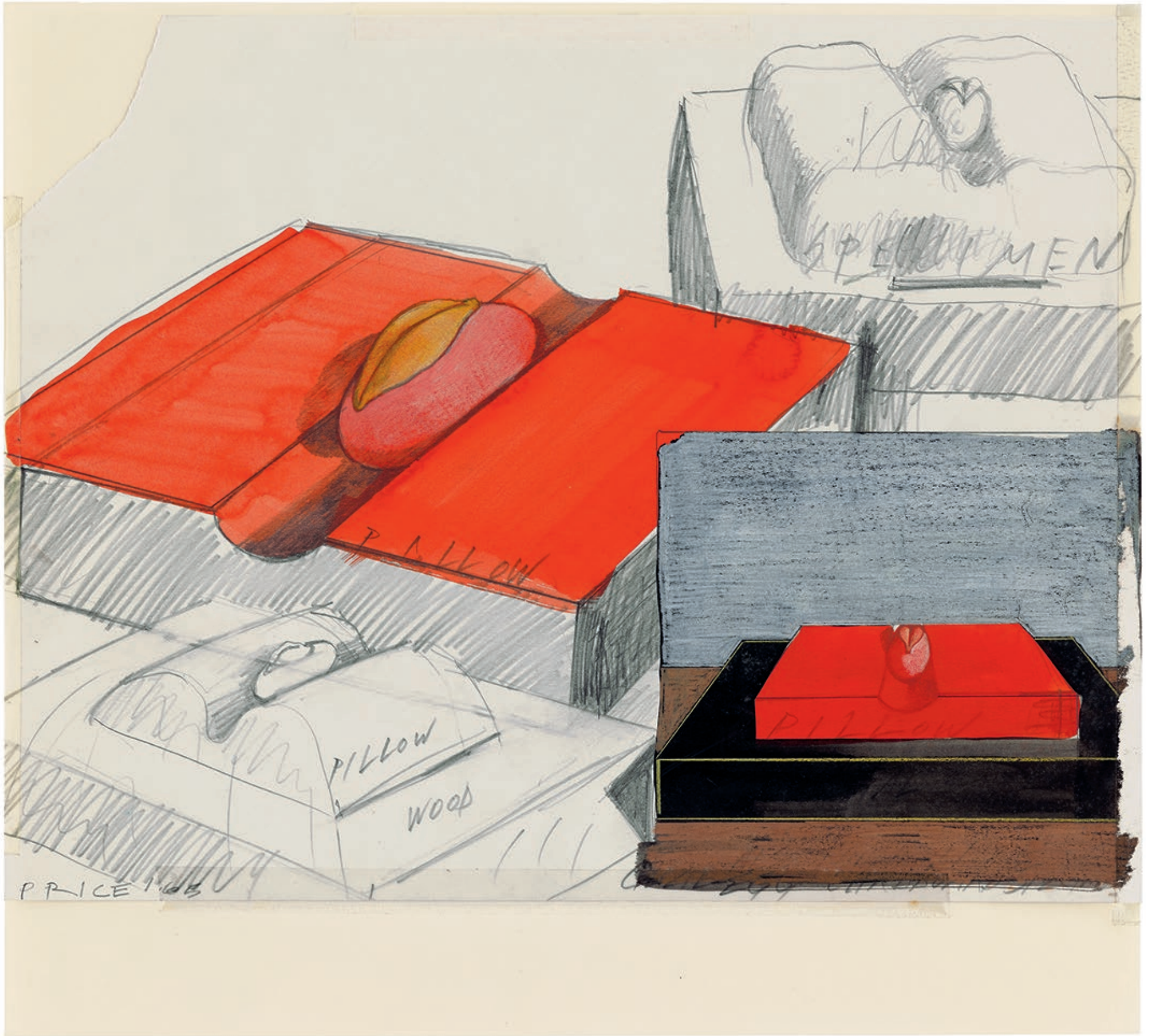




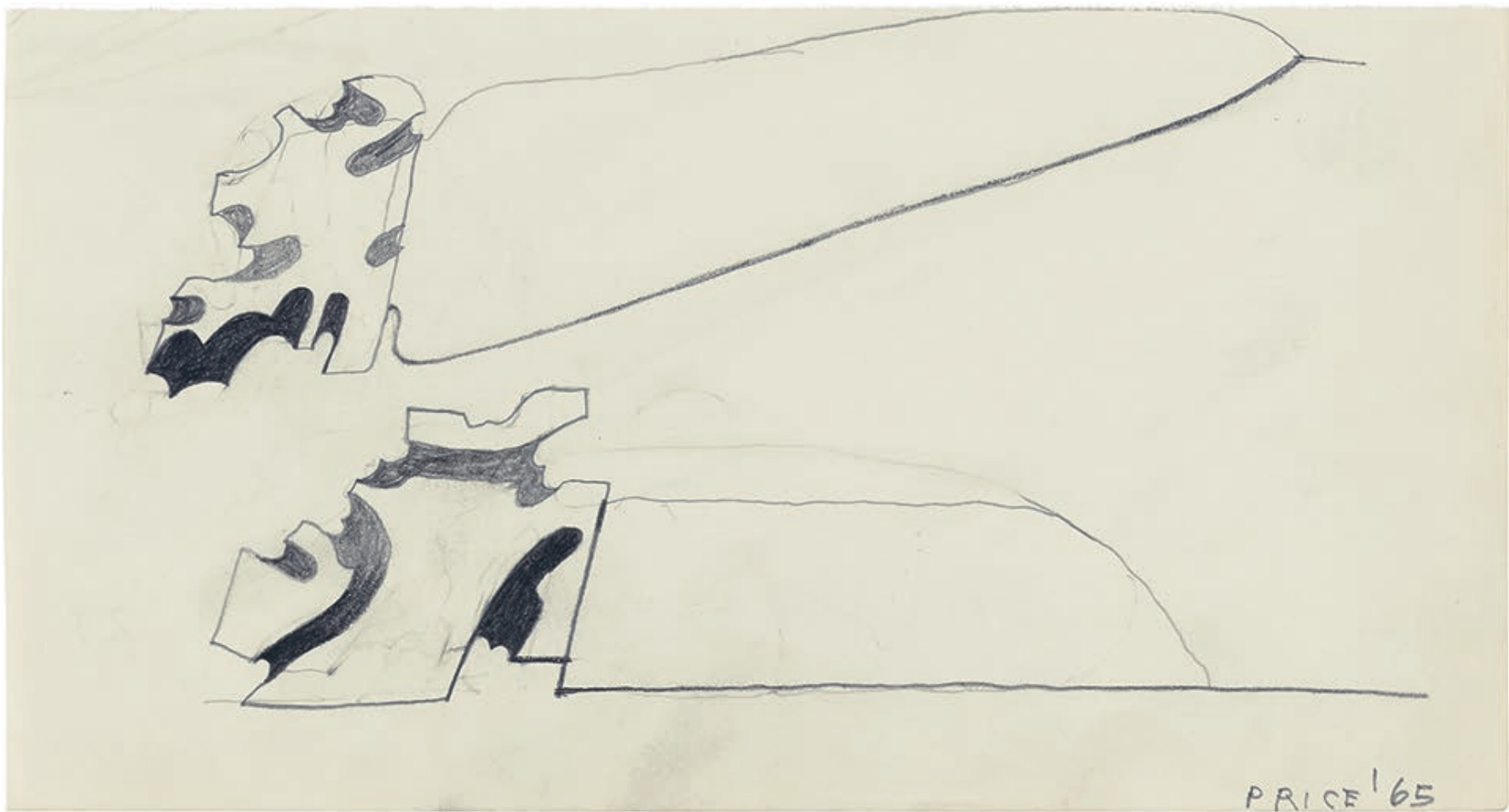














REFLECTING BUMP - PRICE<sup>1</sup>67



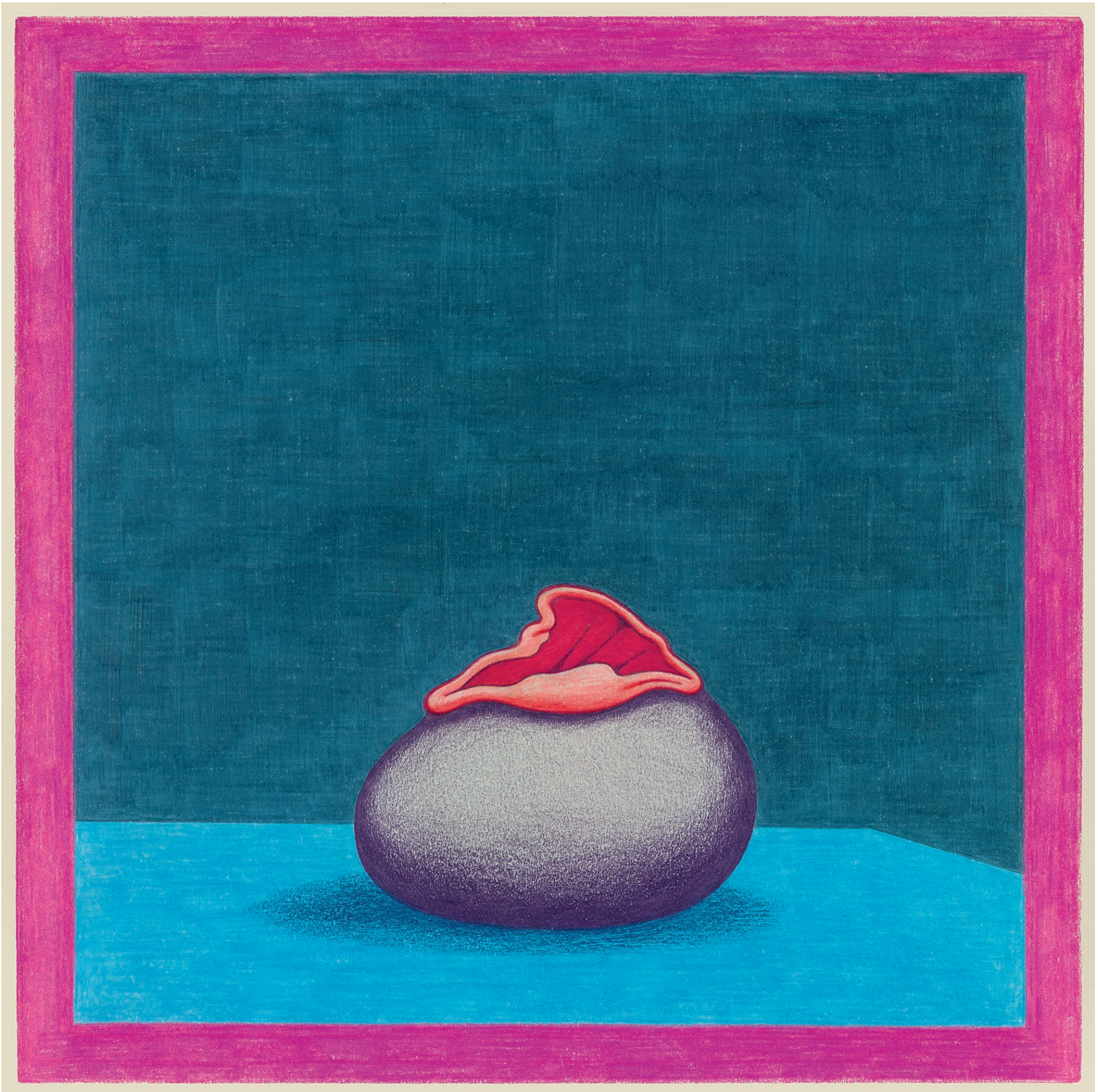




"ACROBATIC FROG CUPS"

PRICE '68





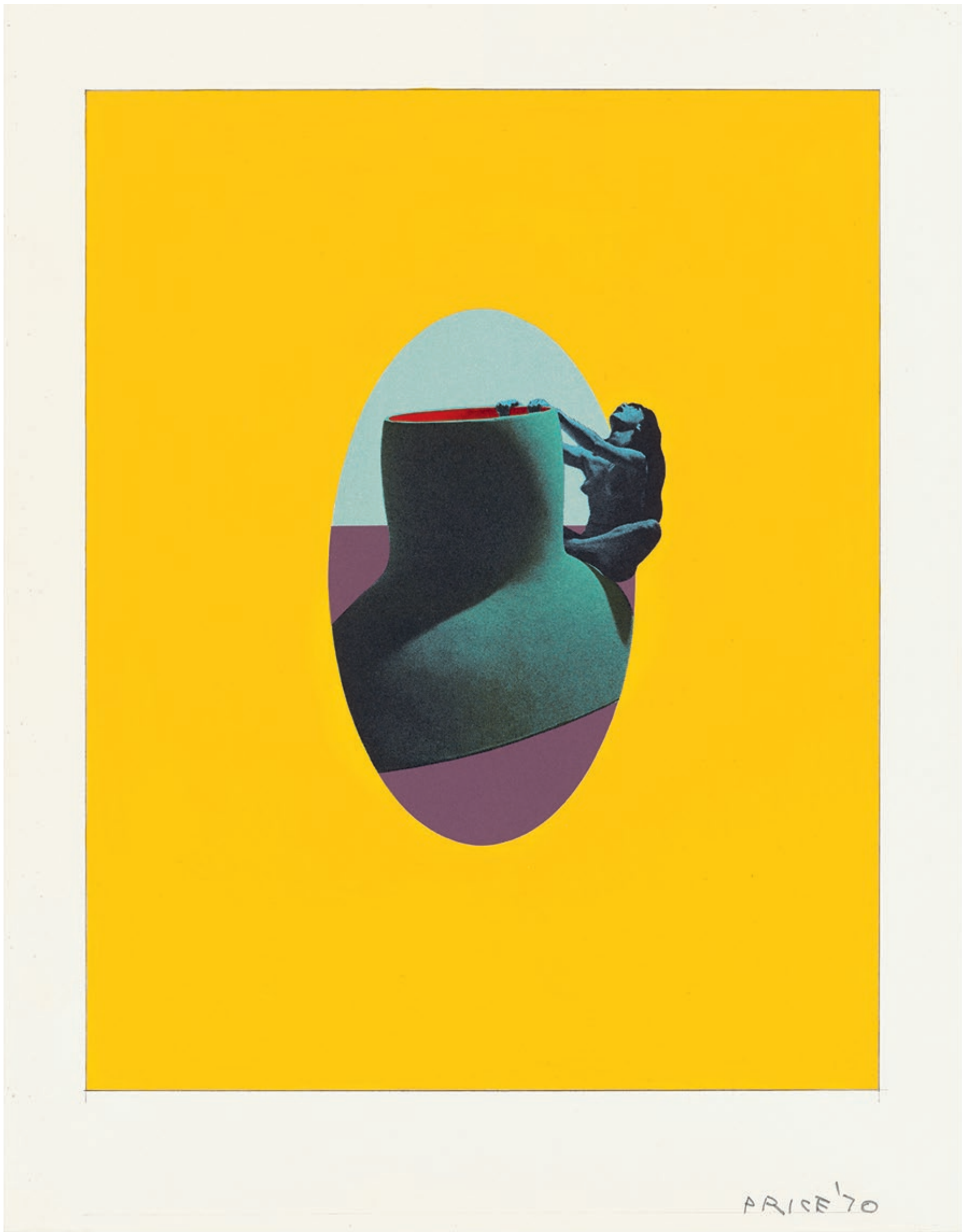
















"CRAB CUP" PRICE '70



1. KEY IMAGE - SLIGHT TILT TO LEFT  
2. TRANS. BEANER PLAT UNDER FIGURE  
3. LIGHTER GREEN PLAT UNDER SHADOW  
4. INSIDE/OUT OF CUP - FILLED IN SOLID V KEY IMAGE  
5. KEY IMAGE PRINTED DARK BROWN -  
6. SIDE - 30 x 60 -  
7. WITH KEY IMAGE 2. UNDER COLORS? - GREEN PART -  
8. IF NECESSARY TO SHORTEN HORIZ. DIMENSION, TAKE OFF RIGHT SIDE.  
9. PLEASE CUT LINES WITH STRAIGHT EDGE - EXCEPT LINES -  
10. WIND UP EXTENTS OF CHAIR LEGS/TABLE LEGS WHEN EXTEND - THANK YOU!

- POSSIBLY DROP THE BOTTOM AND JOIN (ONE INCH WIDE - ONE INCH HIGH LINE)?



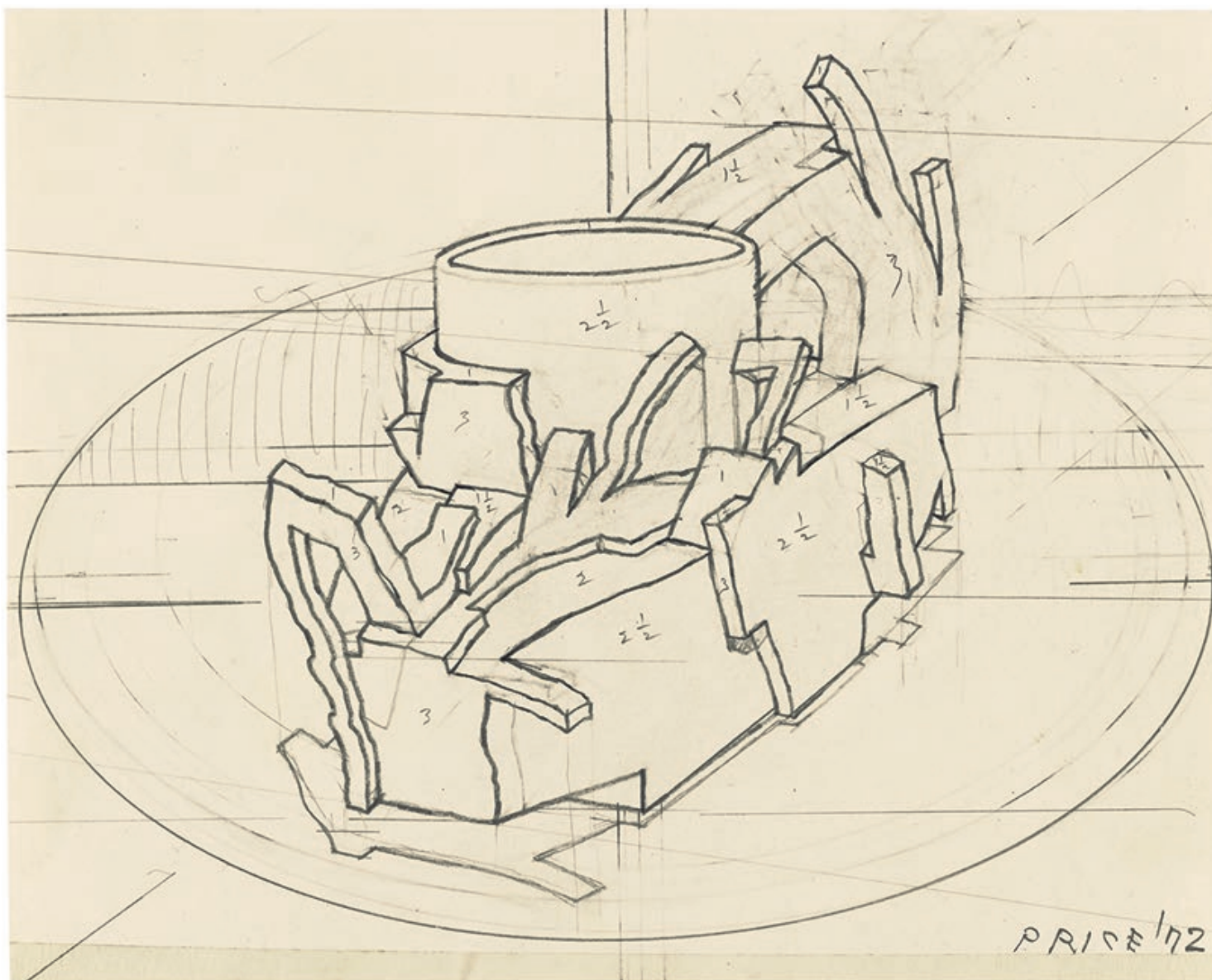












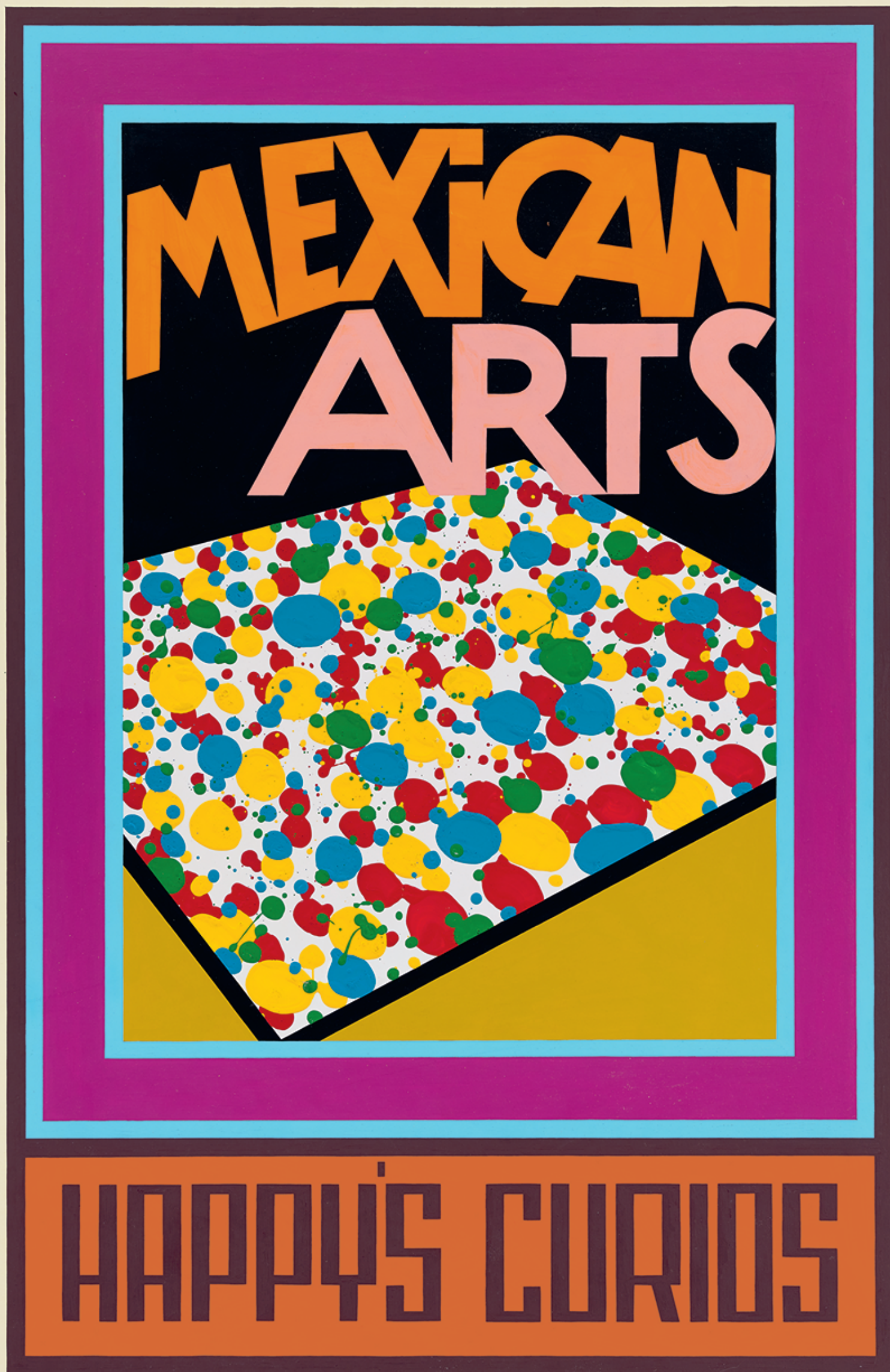


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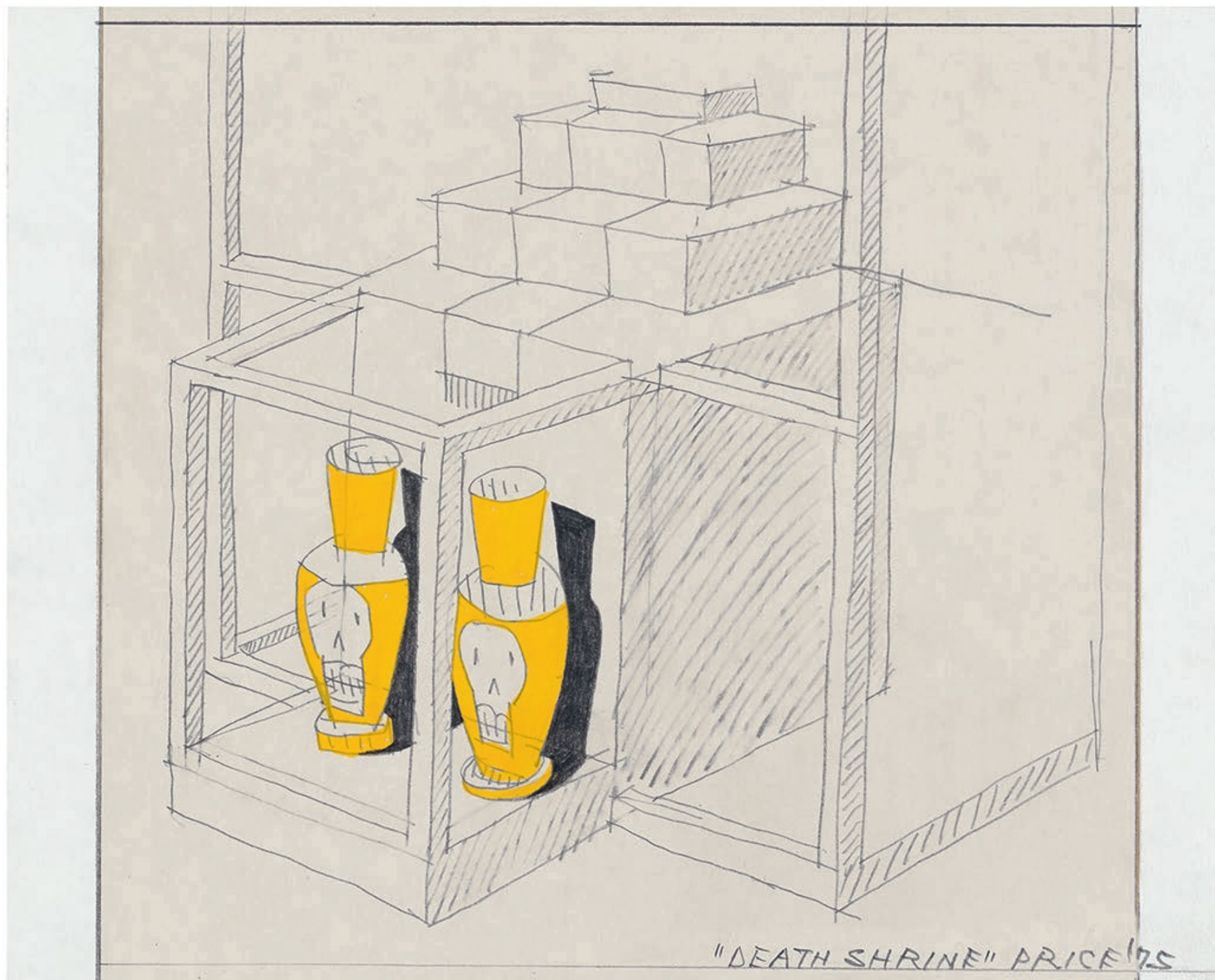




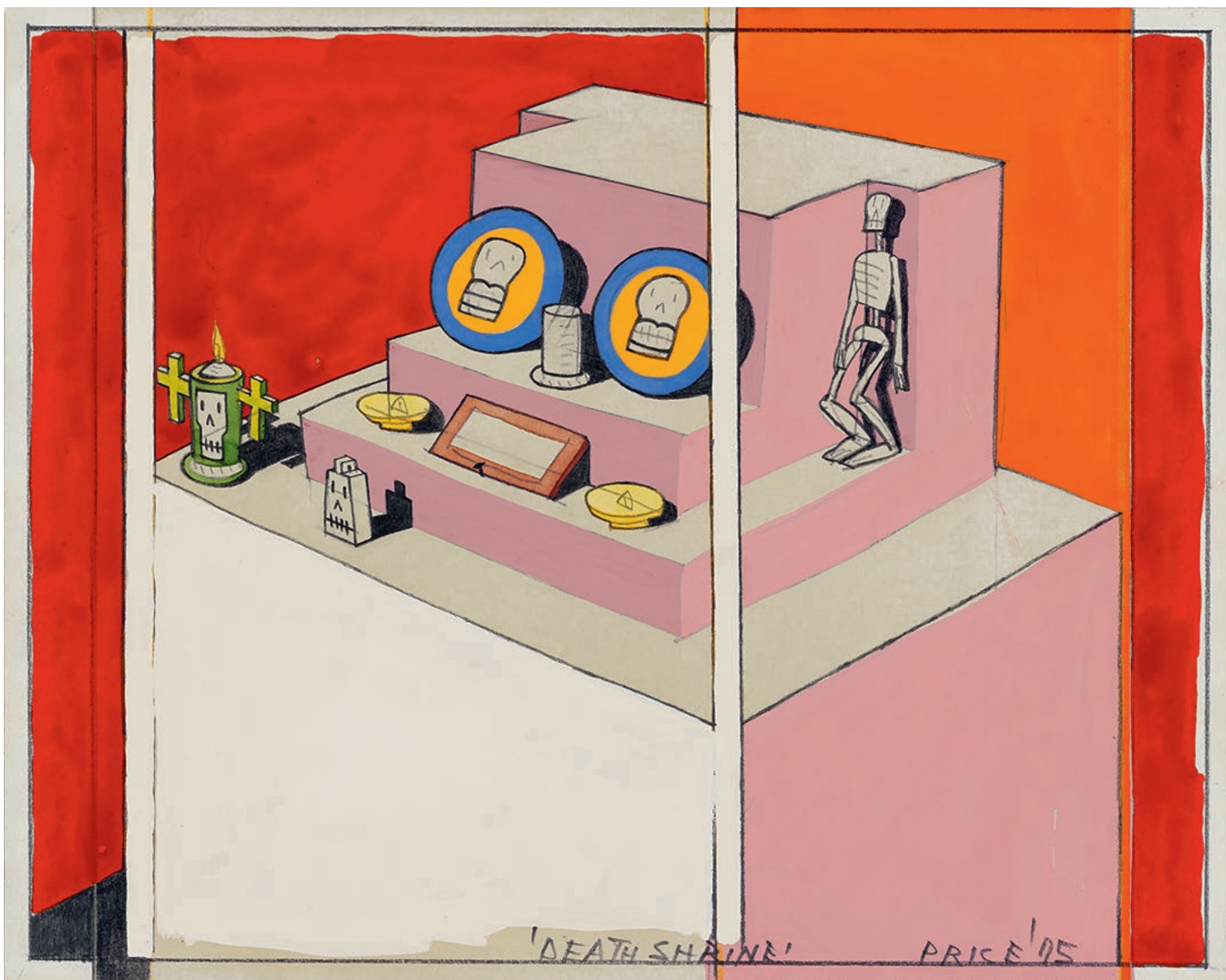
















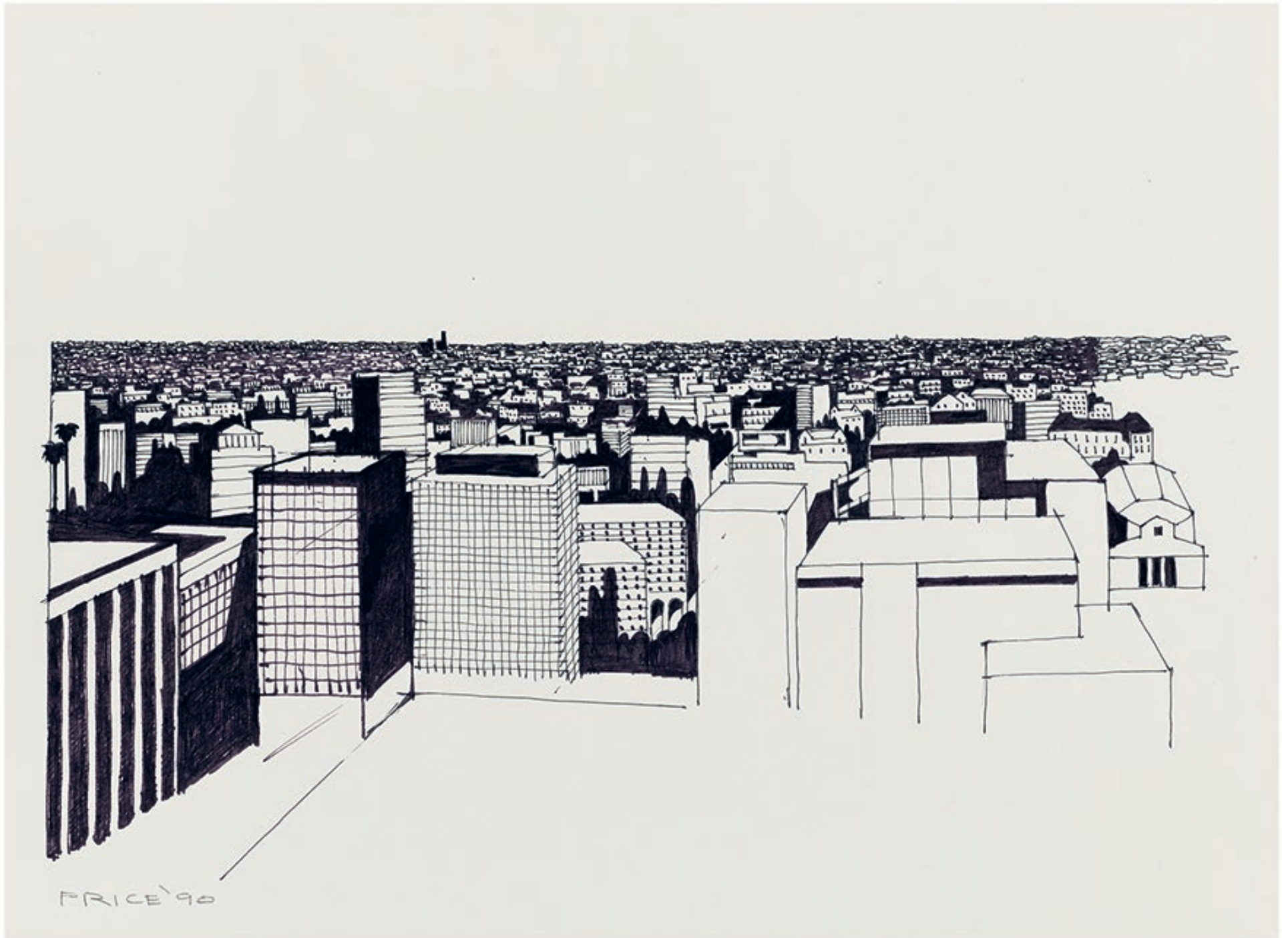










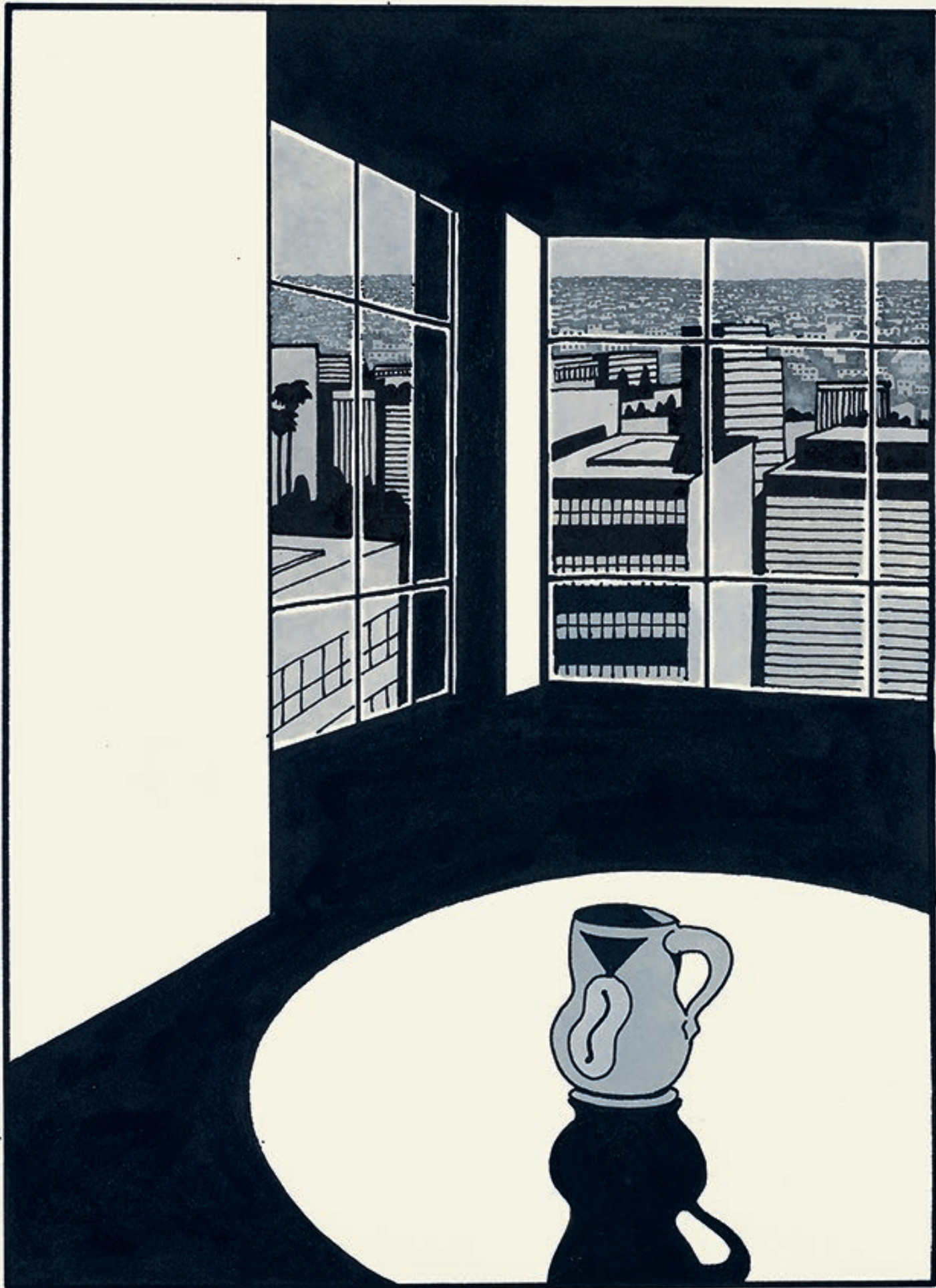




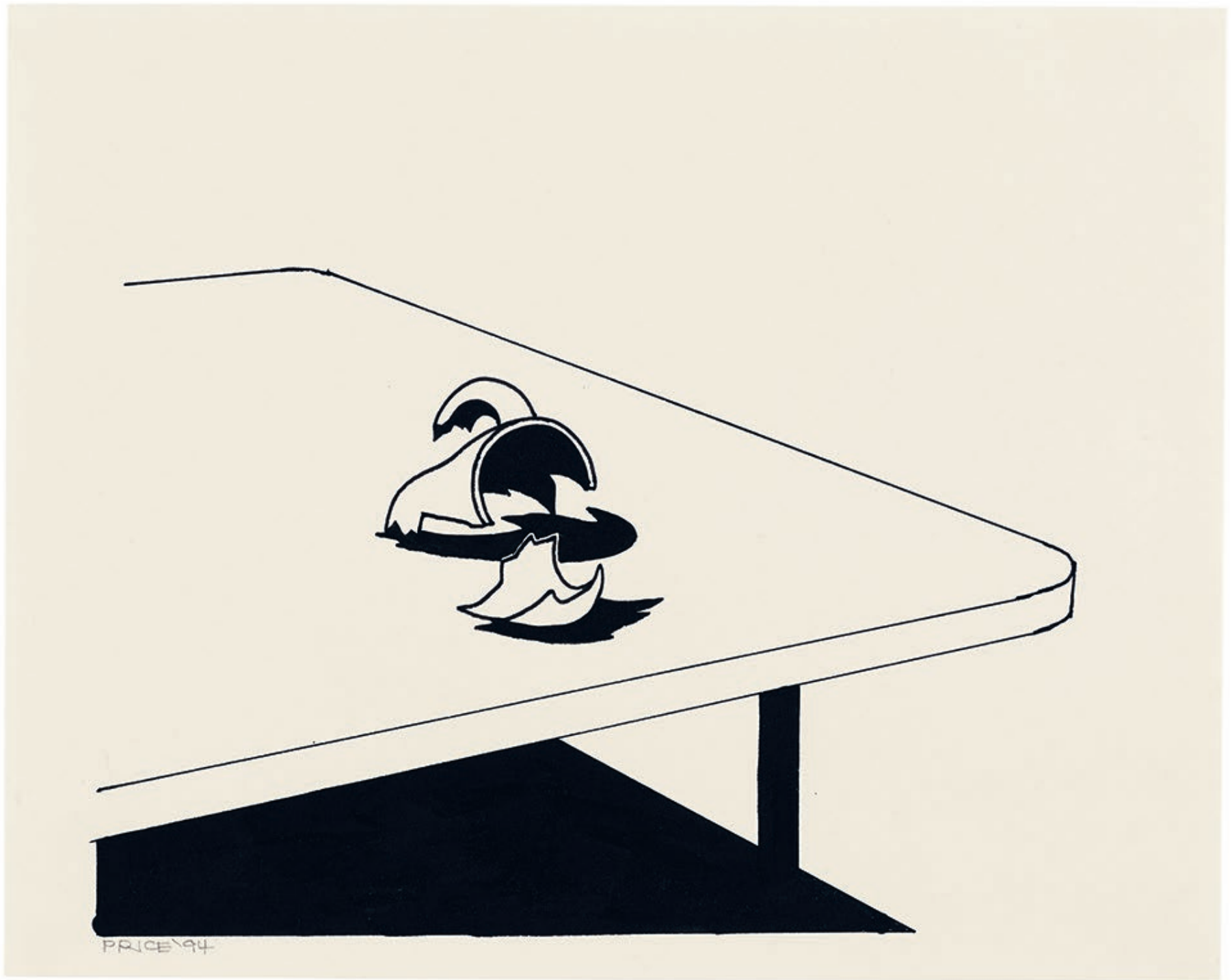






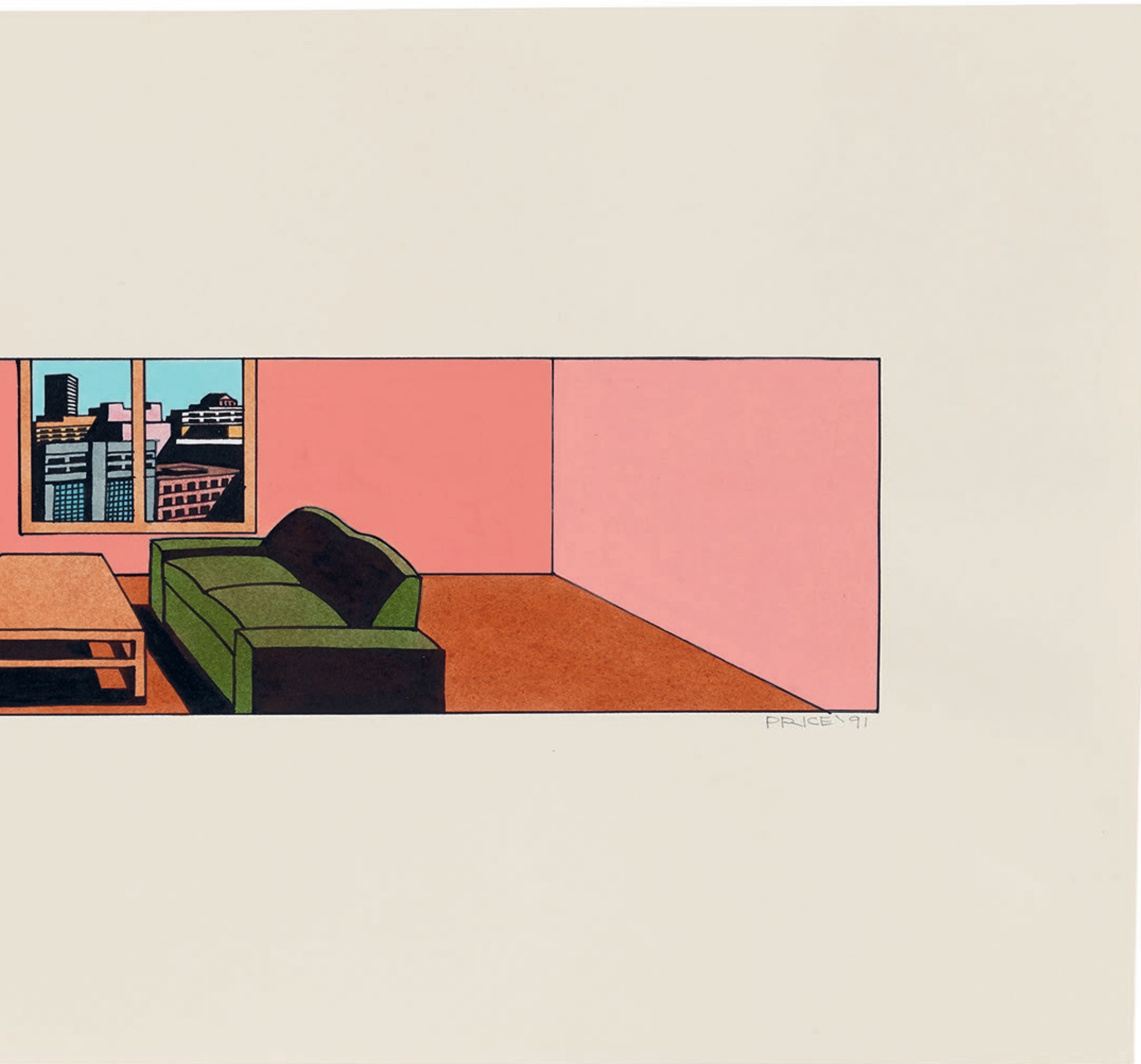


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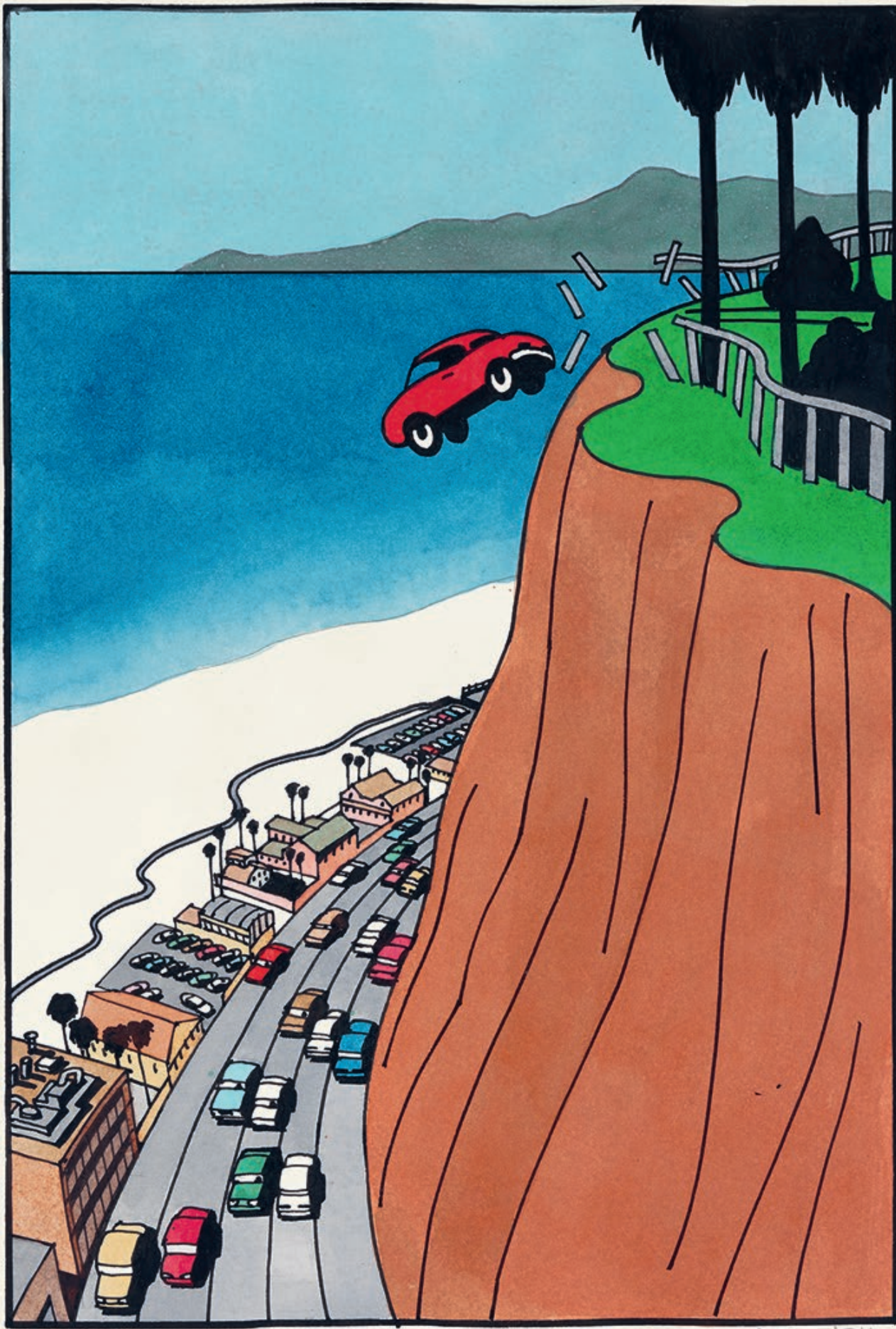












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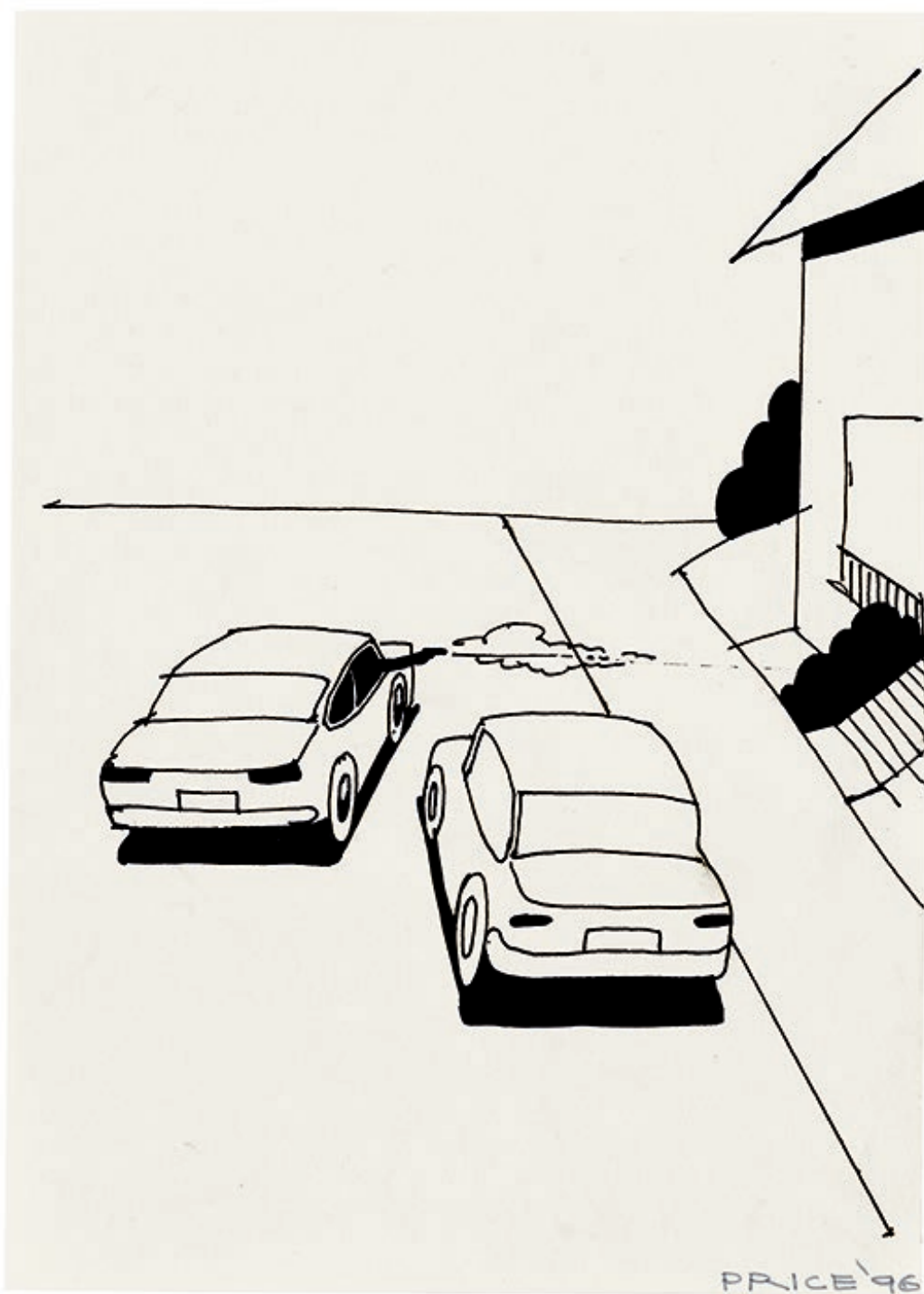


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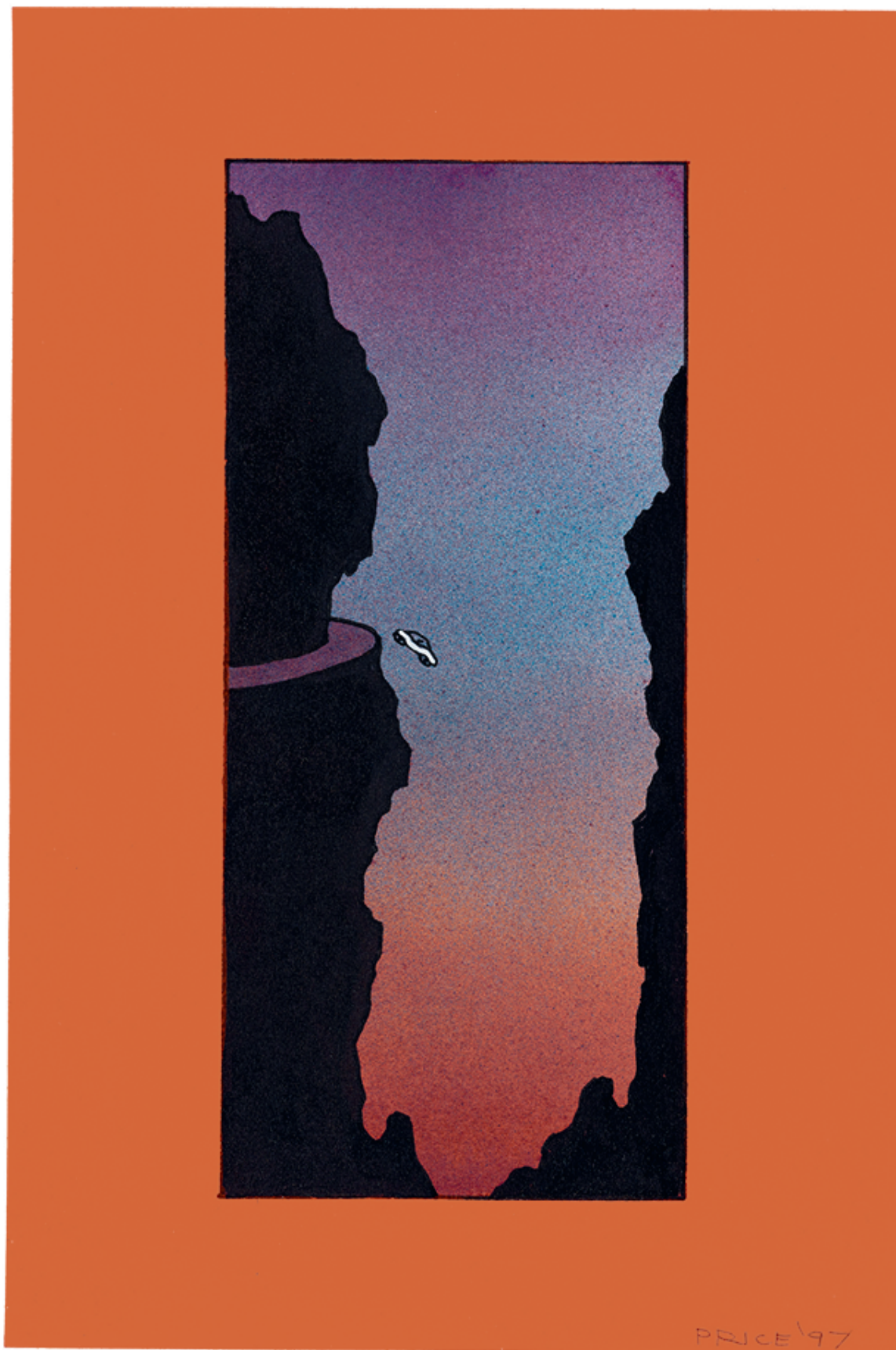






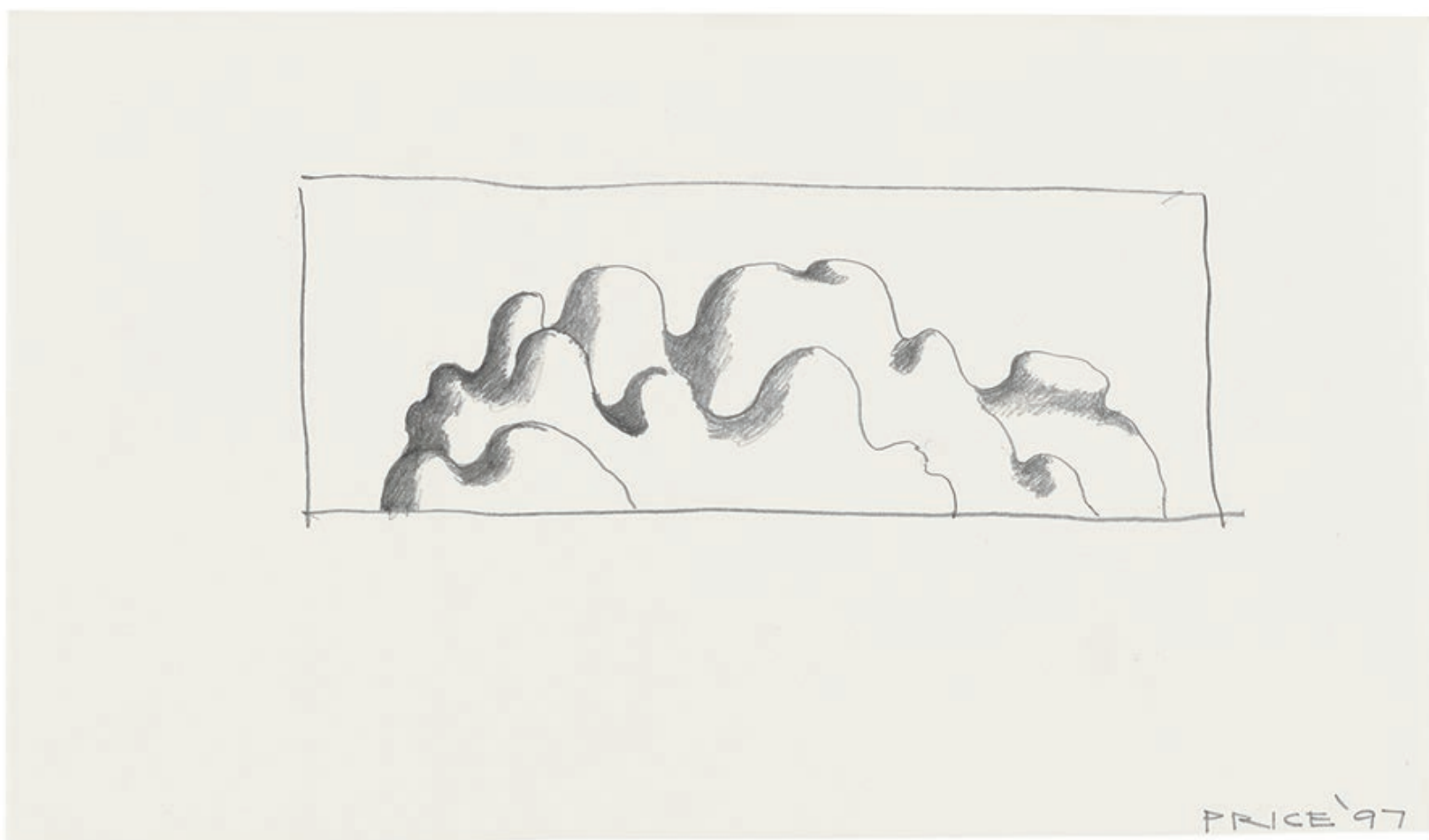






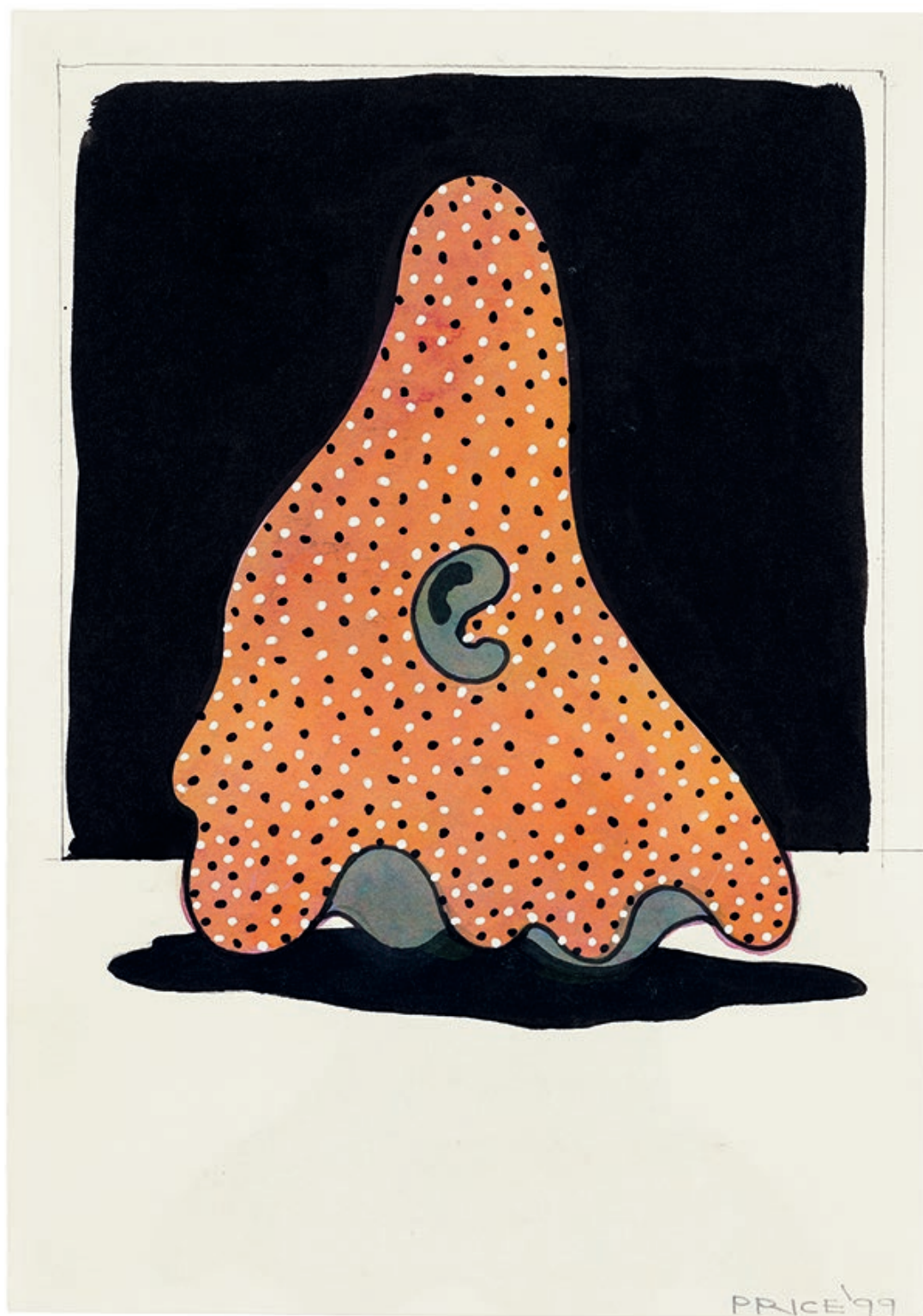




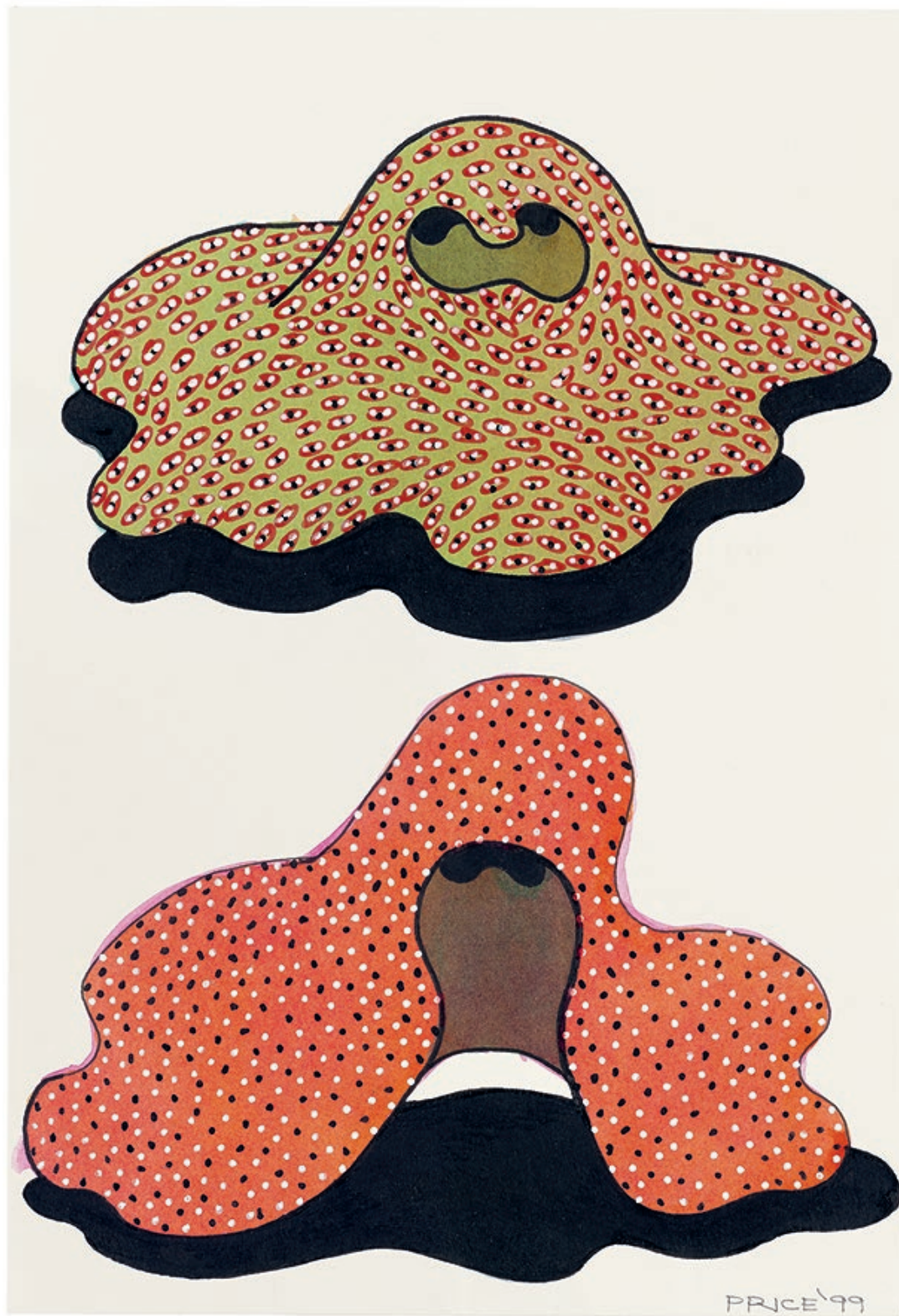












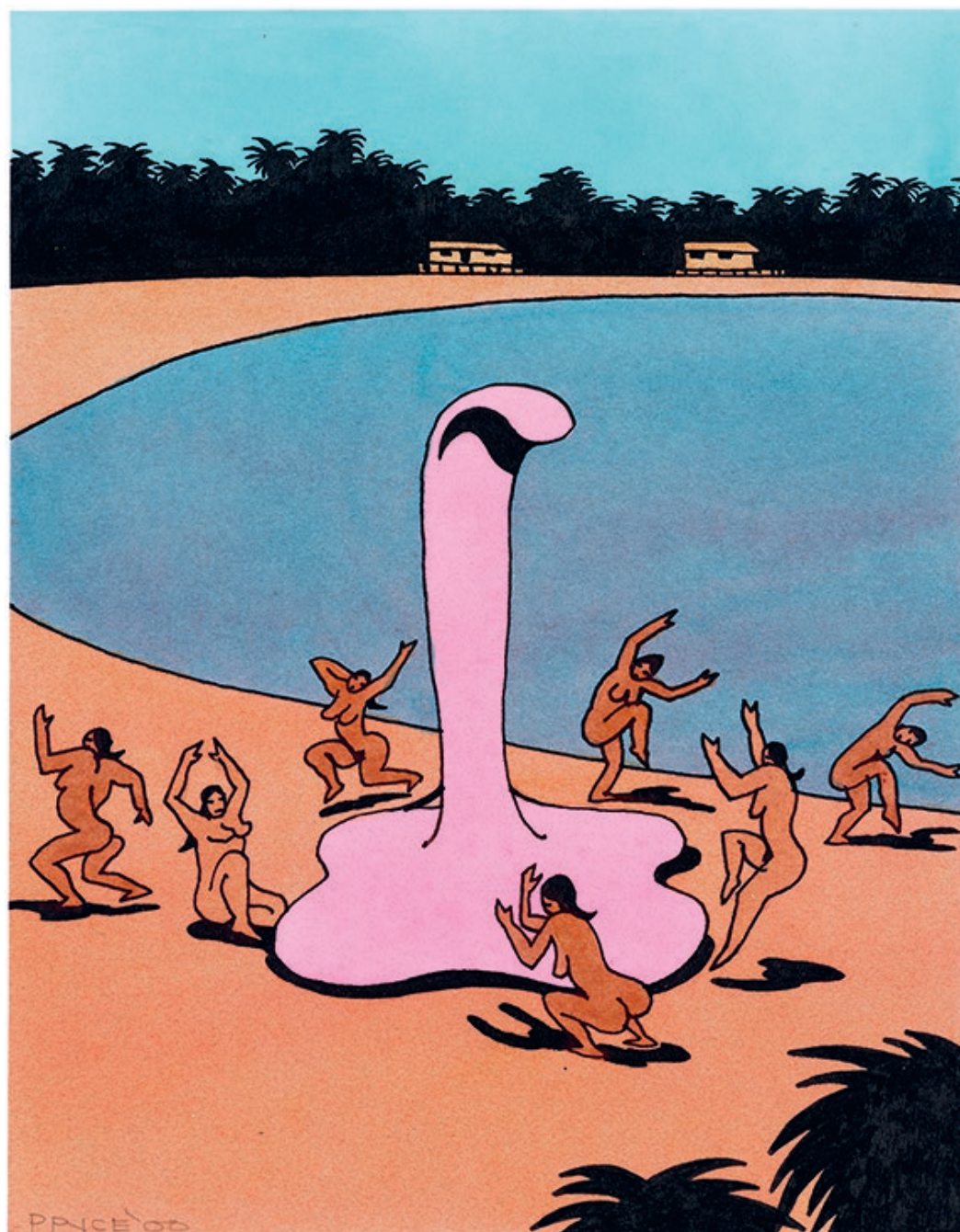


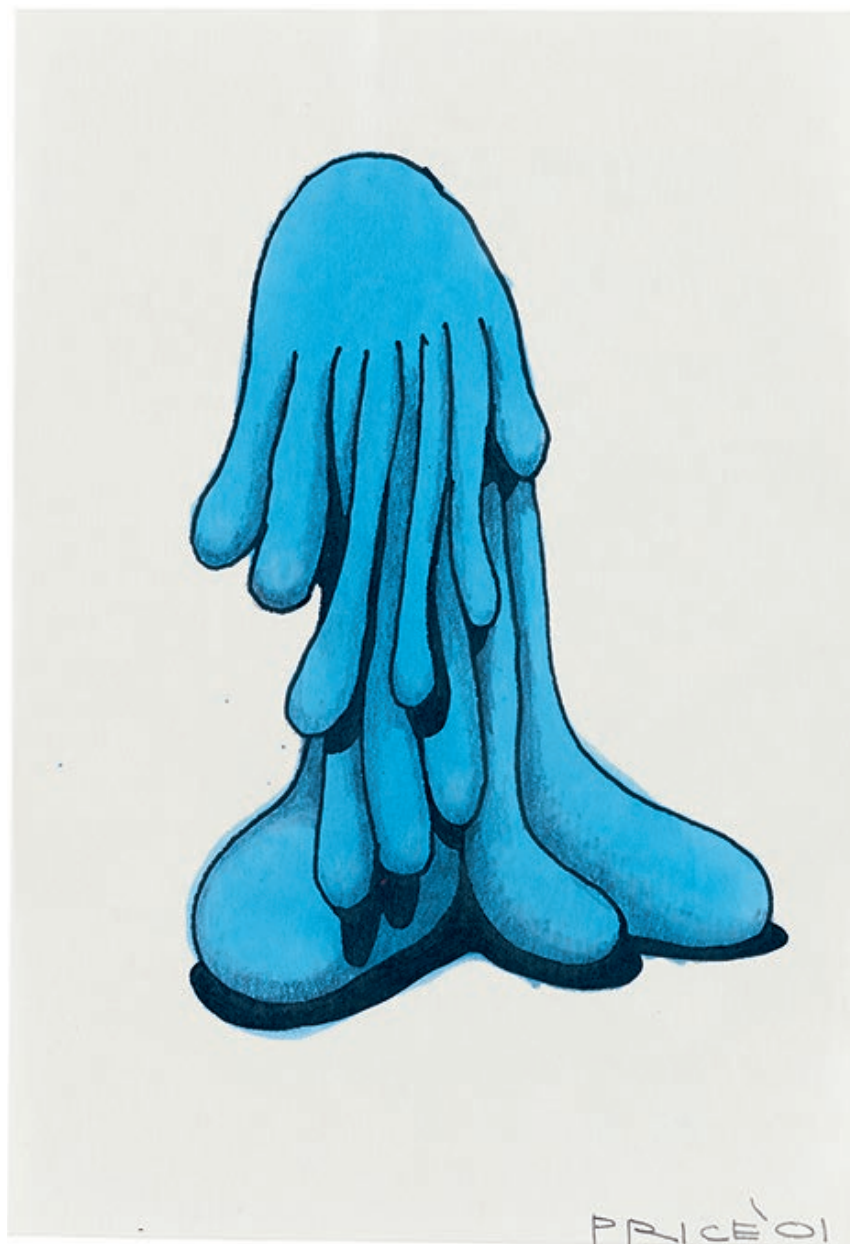




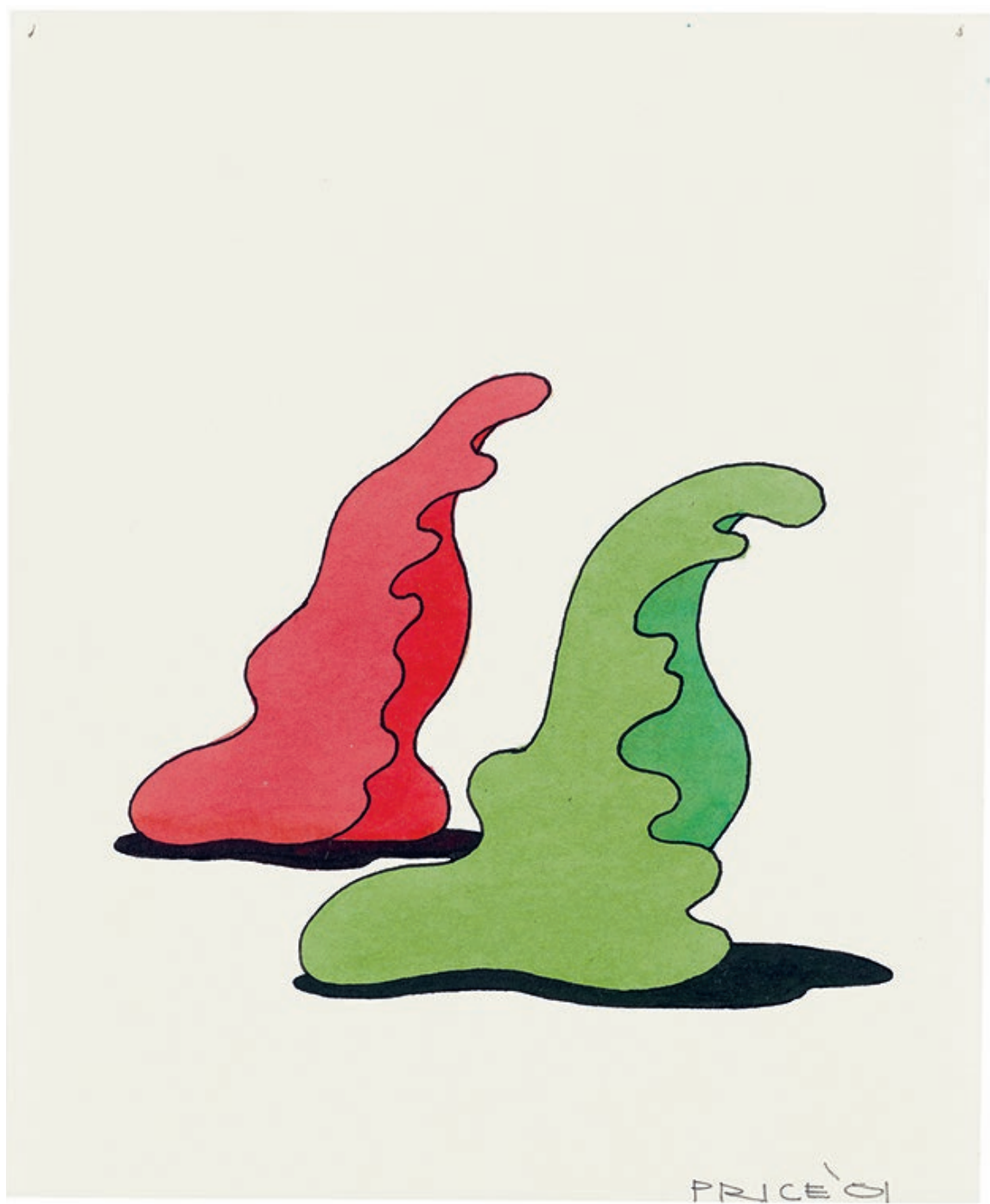






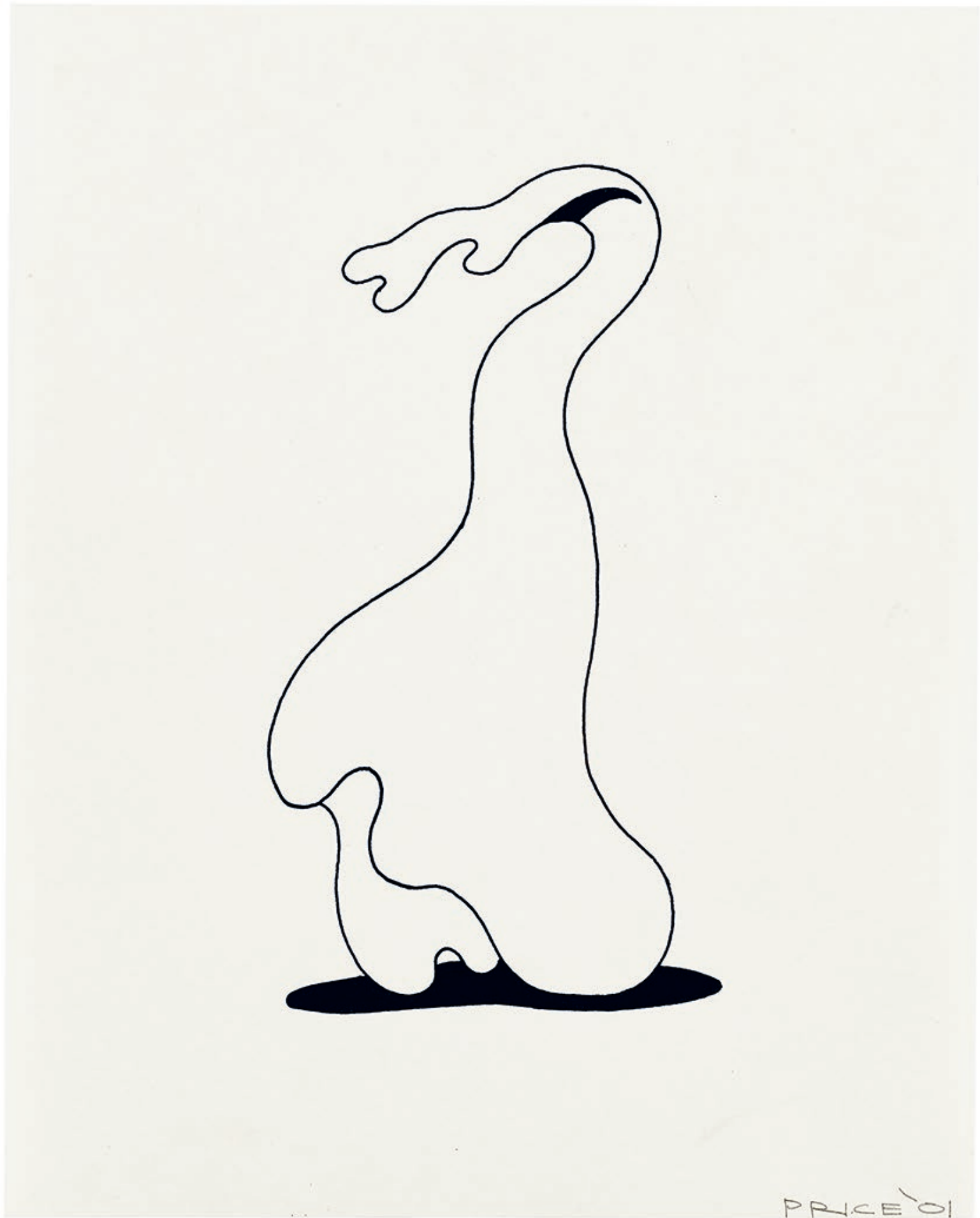




































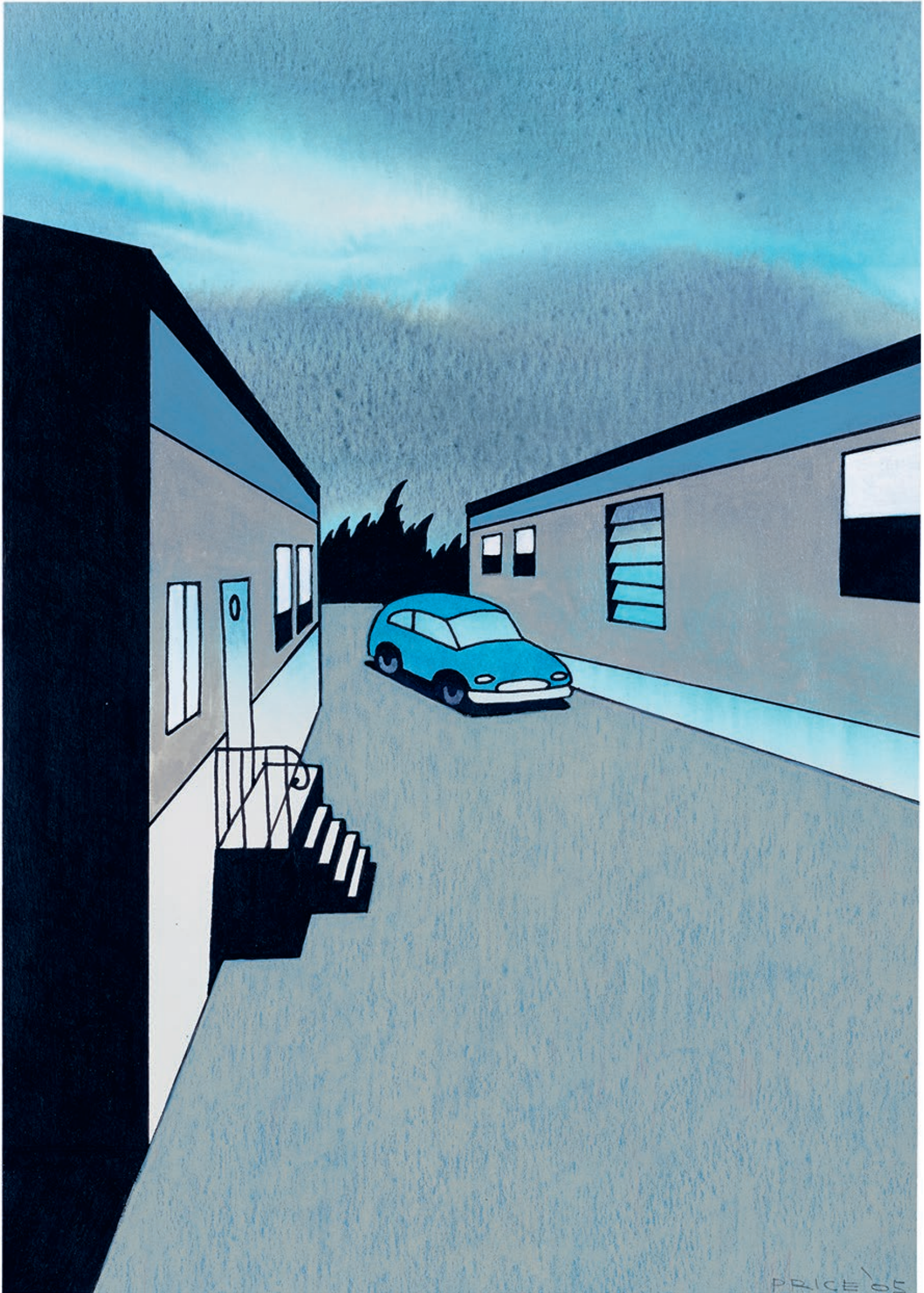




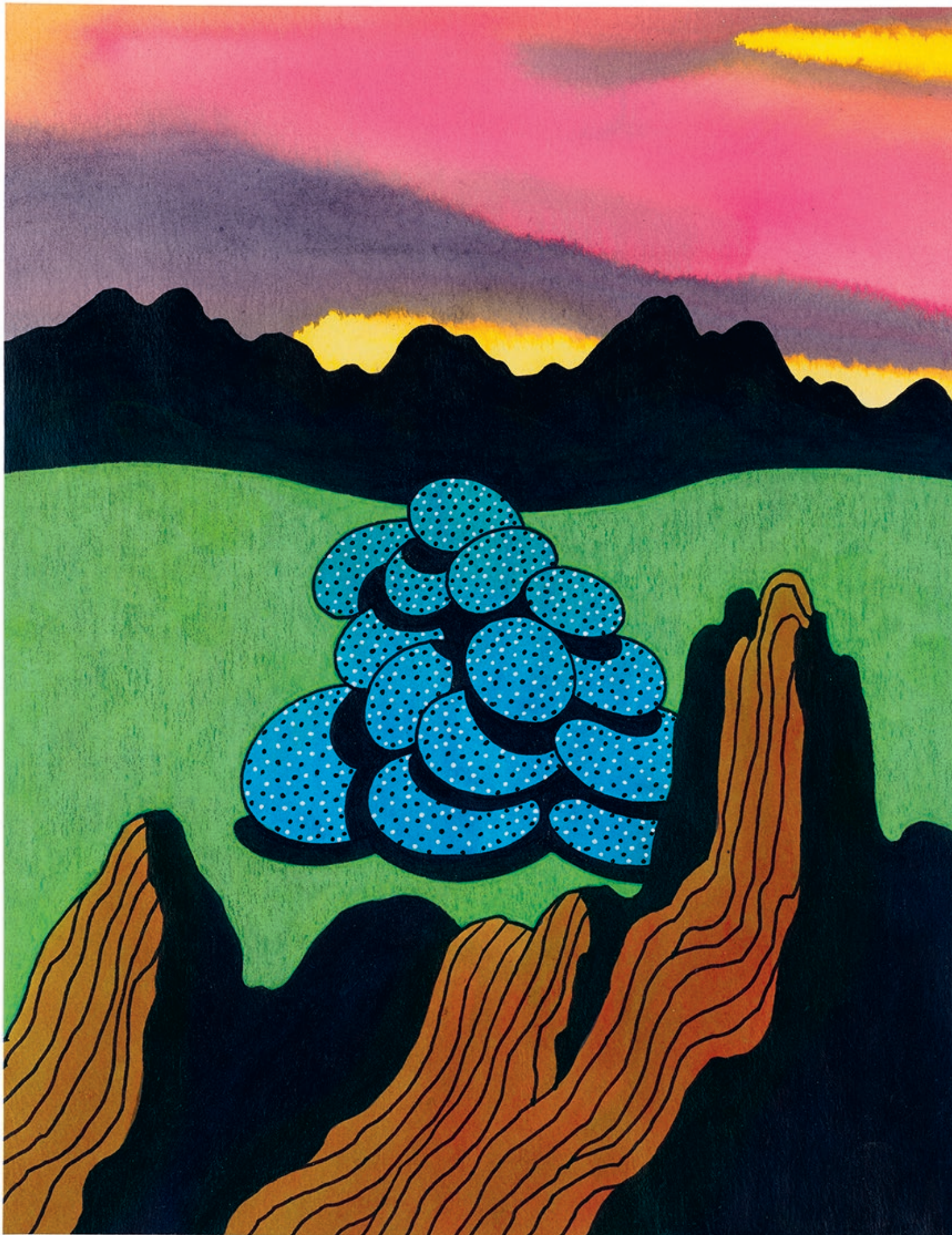




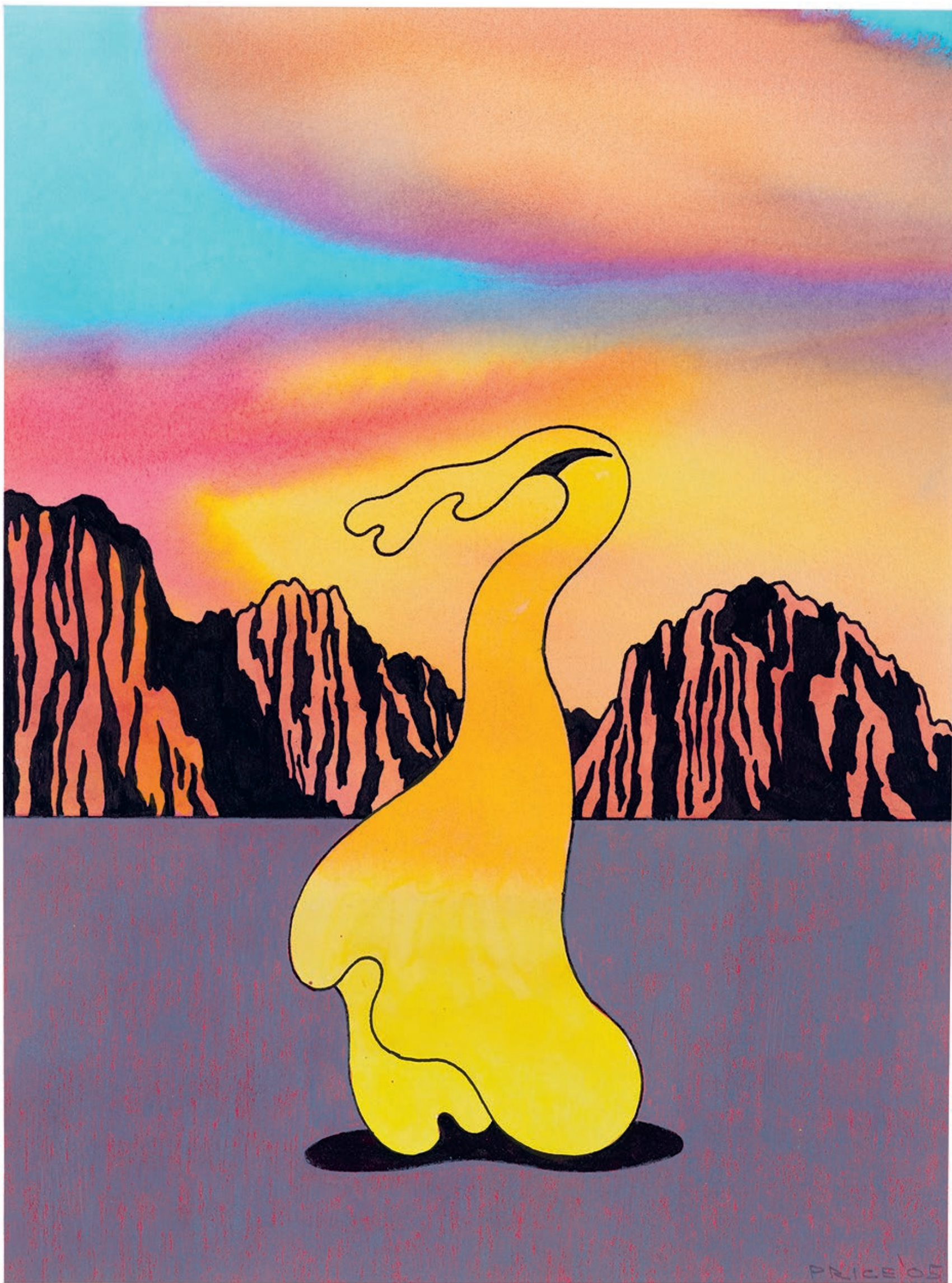




















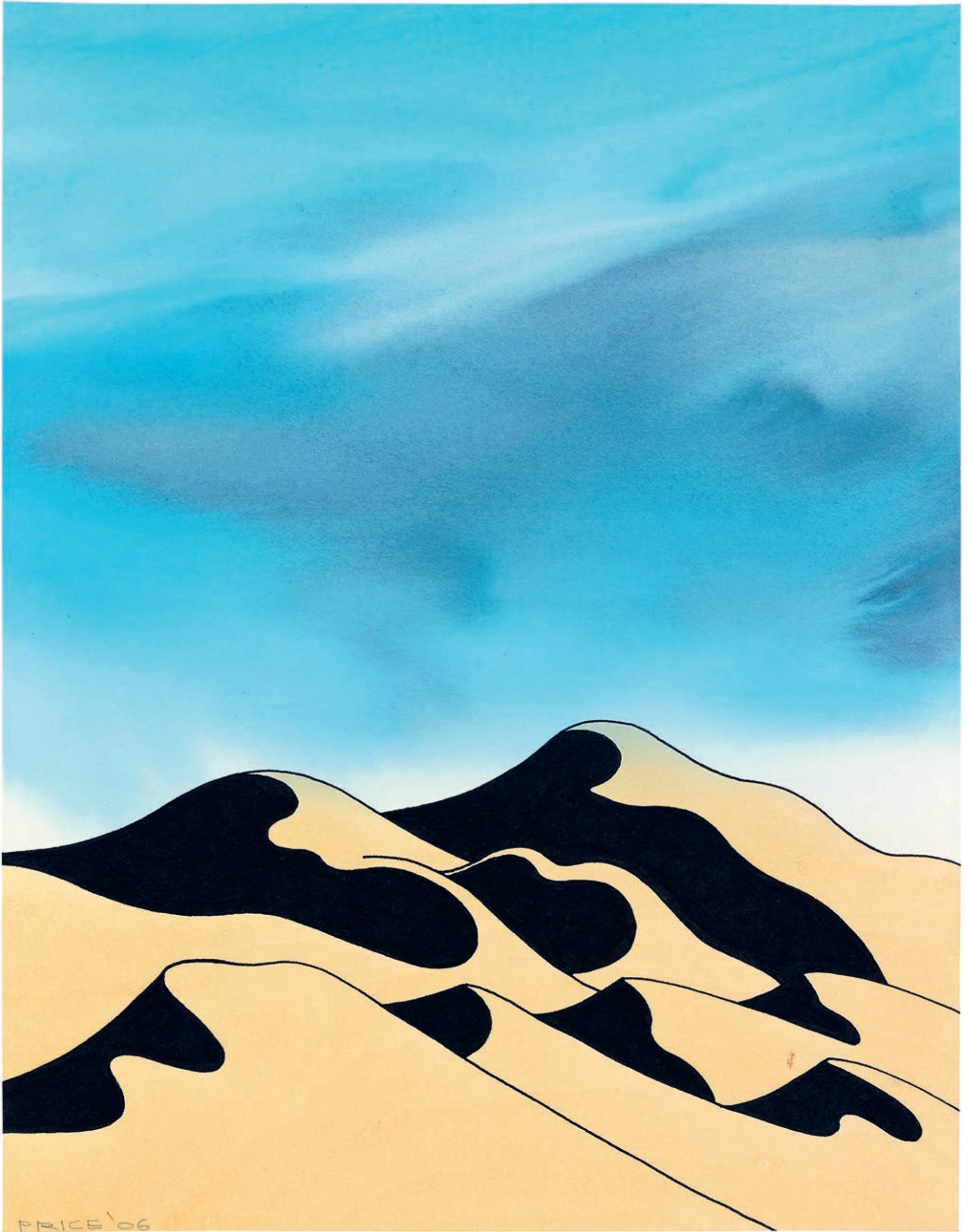
























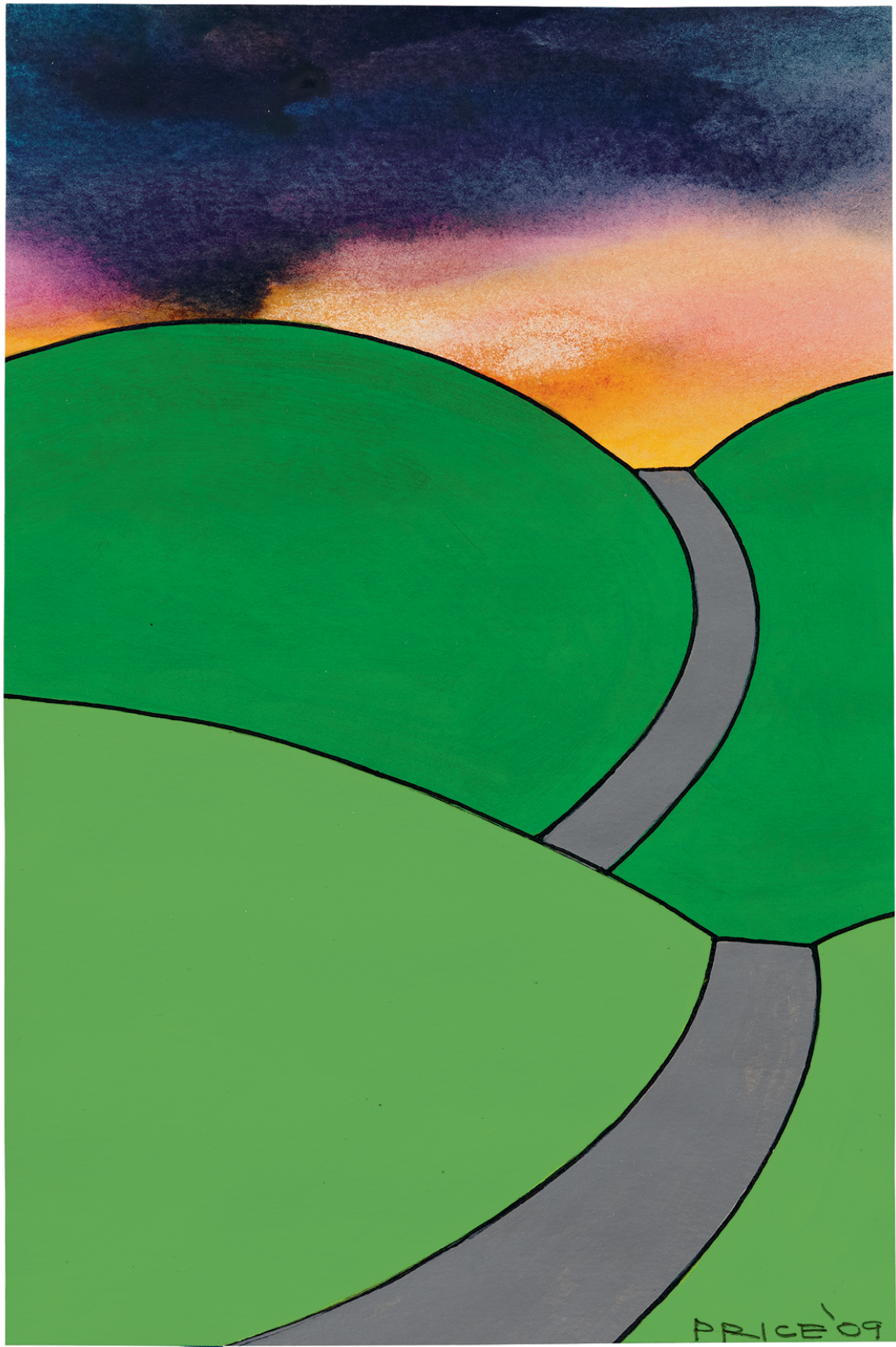














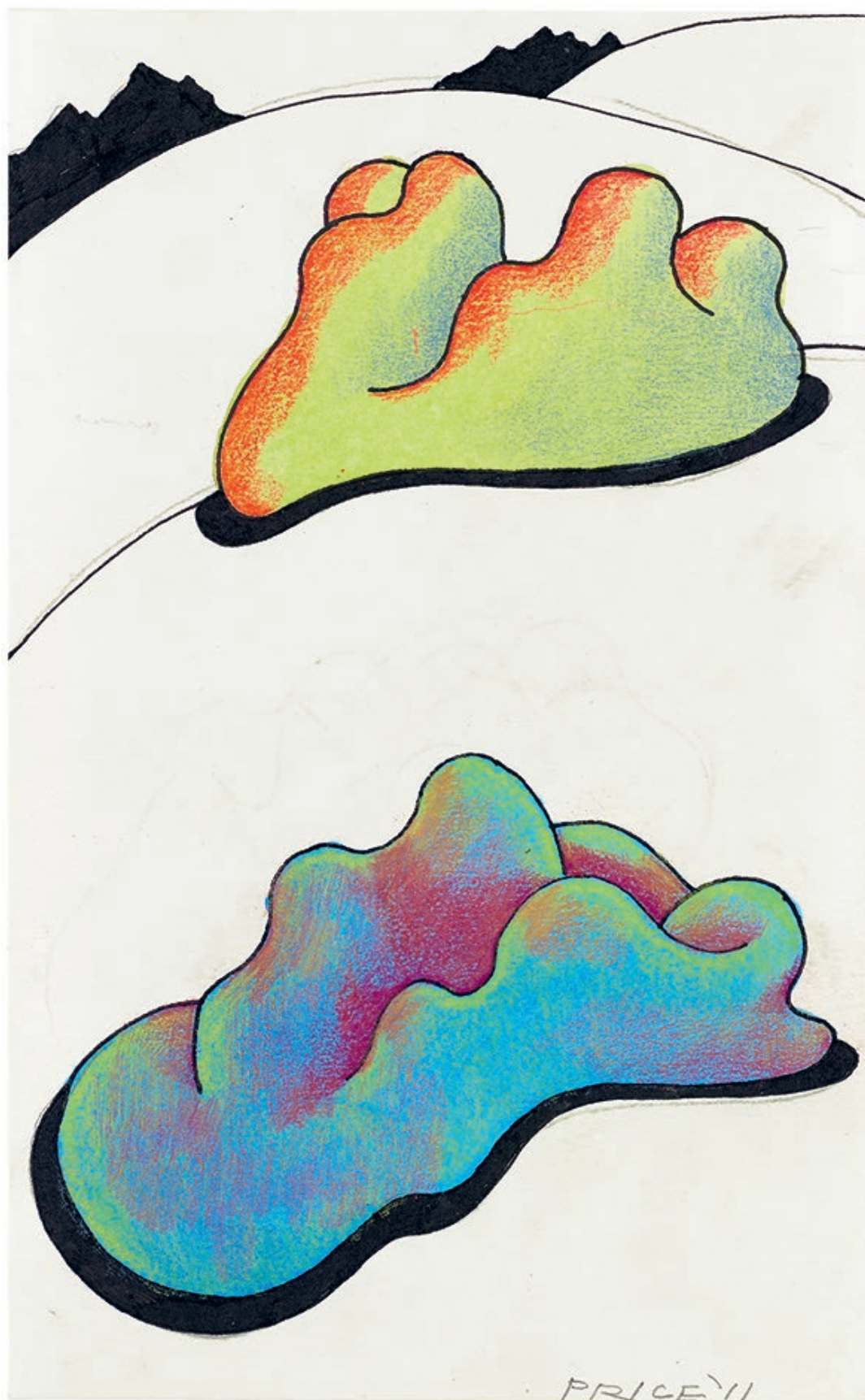












# Ken Price on Paper (and Beyond)

Jean-Pierre Criqui

Now Paris, our black classic, breaking up  
like killer kings on an Etruscan cup.  
—Robert Lowell, *Beyond the Alps*

As a teenager, long before I knew who Ken Price was, I encountered his work when I acquired Ry Cooder’s album *Chicken Skin Music* (Reprise, 1976) [fig. 1]. The drawing on the album’s cover, executed in ink and acrylic, depicts, from behind, a nude woman sitting on the ground and gazing over her shoulder at the viewer. Lying between her parted legs is a skeleton wearing a sombrero. The image is chromatically intense, as strange as it is enticing, and in it one can detect the combination of simplicity and sophistication that characterizes “Smack Dab in the Middle” or “Goodnight Irene,” two songs on the album. I don’t remember seeing the name Ken Price anywhere on the LP, and the CD that has replaced it in my collection (made in Japan, its fidelity to the original apparently on par with this kind of reissue) makes no mention of it. Savoring a certain *objective chance*, therefore, I now find myself needing to “accompany with a bit of text that one might never read” (to use Paul Valéry’s memorable expression) a group of drawings in which the female nude reappears here and there — in the landscape (*Woman in Nature*, 2004) [p. 70] and in more domestic settings (*Couple in Window*, 1997) [p. 51] — often with a particularly Mexican penchant for the “silly macabre,” a category I’ve just coined for the sake of my argument (*Death Shrine*, 1975) [pp. 26 and 27]. A flattering and most agreeable task, it must be said, but its stakes give rise to difficulties, even for someone who has, over the years, come to know the work of the artist in all its diversity. Price has been well served by critics of late,<sup>1</sup> and one should not expect to learn more about his wider oeuvre here. For an observer dedicated to a paradoxical remove in which proximity and distance are forever being combined, it is incumbent to resist the feelings and associations triggered by these drawings and instead attempt to grasp anew, if only by anamorphosis, something of the extreme singularity that produced them.

Ken Price’s body of works on paper can, at first glance, be divided into two sub-groups: those that relate to his work as a ceramicist/sculptor, whether in preparatory mode (*Specimen*, ca. 1960) [p. 5] or after the fact (*Specimens on Pillow Bases*, 1965) [p. 7]; and those that, without any explicit relation to his three-dimensional output, emerge from his imagination or observation. *Untitled (Don’t Think About Her)* (1990) [p. 34] and *West L.A.* (1990) [p. 35] illustrate the two forks of this second branch, which denotes a kind of rooted preeminence:

*I’ve been drawing since I can remember, which would put me at three or four years old, at which point every kid I’ve known is into drawing. I just kept doing it and had a pretty good early career. In grammar school I made drawings of nude women for my friends. In the fifth grade I was sent to the principal’s office and then home with a note after the teacher caught me drawing bubble dancers hidden inside a book I was supposed to be reading. At Uni High [University High School in West Los Angeles] I was the cartoonist for the school newspaper. I illustrated a yearbook at Santa Monica City College, and so forth. Later I showed a few drawings in galleries, including some in*



Fig. 1  
Album cover art by Ken Price for Ry Cooder’s *Chicken Skin Music*, 1976



Fig. 2  
*Venus of Willendorf*, c. 28,000–25,000 BC  
Otolithic limestone  
Height 4⅞ inches; 11 cm  
Naturhistorisches Museum, Vienna

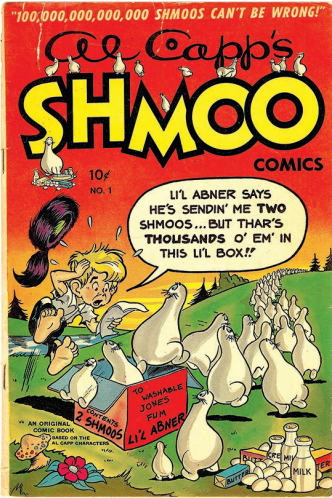


Fig. 3  
Al Capp’s *Shmoo Comics*,  
issue number 1  
1949





Fig. 4  
Bernard Palissy  
*Oval Basin*, ca. 1550  
Lead-glazed earthenware  
18 $\frac{3}{8}$  x 14 $\frac{1}{2}$  inches; 48 x 37 cm  
The Getty, Los Angeles

Fig. 5  
Ken Price  
*Snail Cup*  
1968  
Glazed ceramic  
2 $\frac{7}{8}$  x 5 $\frac{1}{4}$  x 2 $\frac{3}{8}$  inches; 7.5 x 13.5 x 6.5 cm  
Los Angeles County Museum of Art

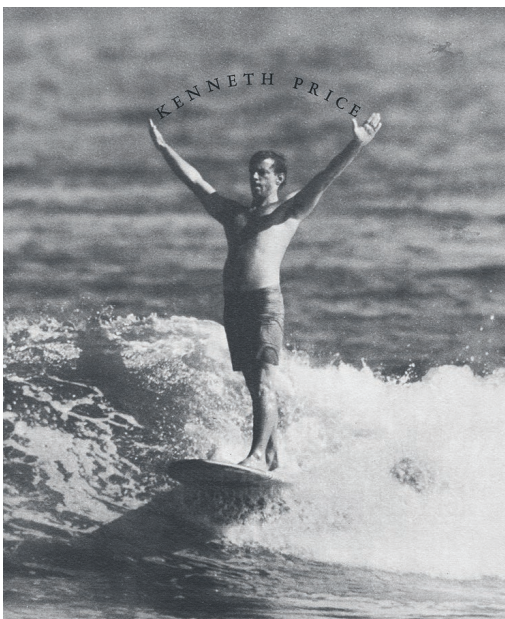


Fig. 6  
Announcement card for  
Ken Price's exhibition at  
Ferus Gallery, Los Angeles,  
October 1961

my 1960 show at Ferus, but they weren't studies or related to the other work being shown. I kept drawings as a private activity until the "Happy's Curios" exhibition in 1978, where it made sense to show some studies for the units, shrines, billboards, and weavings in that show.<sup>2</sup>

The tutelary power of drawing was, for Price, clad in an aura both transgressive (the punished schoolboy admired by his peers) and magical (as in the 1997 drawing *Talisman to Avert Falling*) [p. 52]. From this foundation rises the persistent perfume of childhood, as if sprayed over the entire oeuvre, which one finds even in the bulbous sculptures from the 2000s, haunted by the Venus of Willendorf [fig. 2] or Diana of Ephesus, as well as by Shmoo [fig. 3], that incarnation of the beautiful and the good invented by Al Capp for his comic strip *Li'l Abner* in 1948 — burlesque Eros and Thanatos deflated suddenly by a pin. Price introduced the animal kingdom into his work in a similarly humorous mode. Bernard Palissy, the most celebrated ceramicist of the sixteenth century, executed glazed dishes populated with frogs, lizards, and snakes in high relief, thus denying his ceremonial wares any practical utility, but no comic intention can be found in their disquieting strangeness [fig. 4]. Price, with his 1968 *Snail Cup* sculptures [fig. 5] and *Acrobatic Frog Cup* drawings [p. 11], on the other hand, was in search of an "extra zip" whose strangeness draws from the childhood domain of mischievousness:

*I'm not sure what inspired me to make those reptile cups; I think my plain cups probably needed some extra zip. When I was a kid I played at a stream with lots of frogs and lizards, so I was familiar with them and thought they were great looking. Maybe it was their small size. Frogs, lizards, snails, and turtles all come in cup scale. Anyway, I really got into them for a while and was looking at books on reptiles and amphibians. Adding them made the cups more enjoyable to make. And they led me into the figurine cups.<sup>3</sup>*

The subsequent passage from *Crab Cup* (1970) [p. 17] to *Untitled (Girl on Cup)* (1970) [p. 15] reveals a transition to an openly erotic register, one in which the female body fuels the motif of the loving cup — both the two-handled vessel (also called a "marriage cup") and the sensual inebriation celebrated by the Rolling Stones in their song of the same name.<sup>4</sup>

In 1996, talking to Kristine McKenna about surfing and jazz, both of which kept him busy during his youth, Price slipped in this observation: "Modernism was a puritanical movement that banished many forms of sensuality and pleasure, but I've never understood that kind of thinking. I mean, what's the point of life?"<sup>5</sup> This unconcealed hedonism, which did not prevent Price from devoting himself to his art in the most serious way, points also — or perhaps above all — to a radical suspicion of cliquishness and grandiloquence. Credos, watchwords, exclusive memberships — none of these seemed to attract Price. To illustrate the announcement card for his second show at the Ferus Gallery, in October 1961 (he was twenty-six), he chose a photograph of himself surfing. Standing on his board, back straight, he stretches his arms out in a V, his posture giving the impression of a prophet or tribune facing a crowd [fig. 6]. His name, typographically fanned out between his hands, suggests a kind of Byzantine-Californian halo, unless one prefers to consider the shape as a whole, seeing instead a silhouette of a cocktail glass in anticipation of the inaugural libations that mark the ritual of the opening.

The ceramics Price was making at the time still test our capacity to name, identify, and classify. The first question raised by these small-format artifacts — almost pocket size, with bright colors and great complexity — is "What is that?" Donald Judd's term *specific objects* is still relevant half a century later because it maintains both singularity and generality. Judd's 1965 text immediately establishes the tone:

*Half or more of the best new work in the last few years has been neither painting nor sculpture. Usually it has been related,*

closely or distantly, to one or the other. The work is diverse, and much in it that is not in painting and sculpture is also diverse. But there are some things that occur nearly in common. The new three-dimensional work doesn't constitute a movement, school or style. The common aspects are too general and too little common to define a movement. The differences are greater than the similarities. The similarities are selected from the work; they aren't a movement's first principles or delimiting rules.<sup>6</sup>

Judd mentions Price a bit later, along with Larry Bell, Tony DeLap, Sven Lukin, Bruce Conner, Edward Kienholz, “and others,”<sup>7</sup> all of them West Coast artists who were focused on producing *objects* (extremely various ones, as such a list suggests).

In his three-dimensional miniatures, Price aims at a refined, organic/sexual, often zany strangeness. When a work comprises several elements, the ceramic component's presentation — its *ostension* — is often highly sophisticated, as in two sculptures titled *Specimen*, one from 1963 [fig. 7] and another from 1964 [fig. 8], both consisting of a wood platform topped with a red velvet cushion, upon which rests the “specimen” (or the *specific*, which also characterizes the work as a whole). The drawing *Specimens on Pillow Bases* (1965) [p. 7], in which Price explores diverse possibilities of display, undeniably recalls certain works by Judd himself, starting with *Untitled* (1963) [fig. 9], the first of its kind in that artist's oeuvre, which gave rise to these words that make us smile and think at the same time: “I did a great deal of juggling to make it uncomposed.”<sup>8</sup> In search of *over-determination* more than indetermination, but always in a mode tinged with irony, Price mischievously overloads the formula by which an artwork offers itself up for viewing, fetishistic connotations included. The idea of a new type of object, one that avoids automatic perceptual responses, persists.

A number of Price's works on paper depict fire, usually in its natural form — see, for example, *Eruption and Lava Flow* (2003) [p. 68], which also includes flashes of lightning. This keen interest makes sense for Price, since fire leaves its mark on the very word *ceramics*. (The Greek *keramos*, meaning potter's clay and any object fabricated with it, derives from the Indo-European root *kram*, “to burn.”) Fire is a gift from the sky, as depicted in the literature of Hesiod, Lucretius, and Buffon. An age-old conception of fire is that humans first mastered it from trees struck by lightning. Why not? That transformation of a disadvantage into an advantage accurately coincides with the supreme ambivalence toward fire that Gaston Bachelard described so eloquently: “Among all phenomena, it is really the only one to which there can be so definitely attributed the opposing values of good and evil. It shines in Paradise. It burns in Hell. It is gentleness and torture. It is cookery and the apocalypse.”<sup>9</sup> There is nothing so natural and so cultural at the same time, for fire is also the condition of art, the “jewel” of Hephaestus, the “flashing flower of fire from which all art springs,” as Aeschylus calls it in *Prometheus Bound*. Price's ceramics, like the sensual impulse that brought them about, present themselves to us like *cooled Dionysian* extracts waiting for eyes that, in the absence of gesture, will restore their essential flame. In a little-known short text, Paul Valéry (him again) underlines that call from desire, that *diversion from finality* that brings art closer to carnal pleasure considered from the point of view of reproduction:

*What do the arts of fire do if not celebrate the chief conquest of man? They derive from his first creations. He had barely tamed fire, subjugated that ardor and through it clay and metals to make the tool, the weapon, and the utensil, when it then diverted him and formed for him values of contemplation and pleasure. There was an early man who, absentmindedly caressing a rough-hewn vase, felt arise the idea of making another one, for the purpose of caressing.*<sup>10</sup>



Fig. 7  
Ken Price  
*Specimen*, 1963  
Glazed clay, acrylic paint, wood, velvet, and string  
8 x 13¼ x 10¾ inches; 20.5 x 35 x 27.5 cm  
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC



Fig. 8  
Ken Price  
*Specimen*, 1964  
Fired and painted clay, wood, velvet  
10 x 16 x 7½ inches; 25 x 41 x 19 cm  
Happy Price, Taos, NM

Fig. 9  
Donald Judd  
*Untitled*, 1963  
Oil on plywood, iron pipe  
22½ x 45½ x 30½ inches; 56 x 115 x 78 cm  
Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC







Fig. 10  
Pierre-Jacques Volaire  
*The Eruption of Mount Vesuvius, 1777*  
Oil on canvas  
53 1/4 x 89 inches; 135 x 226 cm  
North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh

Fig. 11  
Poster designed by Wes Wilson for a concert at the Fillmore Auditorium, San Francisco, 1966

Price's drawings of volcanoes remind us of depictions made by many artists during the decades before and after the year 1800. Their volcanoes are the *laid-back* heirs of the grandiose cataclysms of Pierre-Jacques Volaire [fig. 10] and John Martin, thanks to whom one could, without risk, taste the quiver of the sublime, as Burke and Kant had theorized, while at the same time recollecting the visionary spasms of the Apocalypse. Around 1783 Piranesi collaborated with the watercolorist Louis Jean Desprez to depict an erupting Vesuvius, as well as the Girandola, the great show of fireworks above the Castel Sant'Angelo in Rome.<sup>11</sup>

Closer to our time, how can one not discern in Price's affection for bursts of lava, lightning, and other menacing skies (*Dangerous Sky*, 2005) [p. 73] a touch of psychedelia, a delayed effect of the particular fantasy relating to fire in 1960s popular culture? "Fire" is a song on the 1967 album *Are You Experienced?* by Jimi Hendrix, who sometimes set fire to his guitar mid-concert. At the start of that same year, the Doors — a rock band from Los Angeles, where Price was born and lived — enjoyed immediate and one might say fulgurant success with the song "Light My Fire." Laying claim to that catalogue of pyromania, graphic artists supporting the psychedelic music scene distinguished themselves with posters of extreme flamboyance. Wes Wilson's design for a poster promoting a concert at San Francisco's Fillmore Auditorium in July of 1966, remains a masterpiece of the genre [fig. 11]. The typography, in red letters against a green background, forms a swirling flame that can only be grasped in successive fragments. Psychedelic posters above all strive to slow down reading — for example, by clashing two complementary colors that at once draw in and blur the eye, forcing the viewer to patiently decipher these words one after the other like flames forever dancing. What is at stake is an aesthetic of revelation — apocalyptic again but also recalling the episode of the burning bush through which God manifests Himself to Moses.<sup>12</sup> The drawings in which Price surrenders to reveries of fire often recall, in their bright expanses of contrasting colors, the art of the poster. On other occasions, catastrophe is mediatized and miniaturized. *L.A. Riot (Car on T.V.)* [fig. 12], a drawing from 1994, presents a television set on which one can see — this detail being the only one in color — a car in flames. Walker Evans wrote about photographs in which Lee Friedlander, in the early 1960s, played with the television motif as a way to introduce an image within an image [fig. 13], calling them "deft, witty, spanking little poems of hate,"<sup>13</sup> which would also suit this case rather well.

(*Political/culinary aside.* "Burn, baby! Burn!" — the three words that served as a slogan of the rioters in Watts, Los Angeles, during the uprisings of August 1965, which erupted over the course of six days and resulted in thirty deaths and much the neighborhood being sacked and burned. The real inventor, or at least the promoter, of this expression seems to have been Magnificent Montague, an African-American DJ who, in the early 1960s, used it to introduce particularly "hot" songs over the airwaves. The Watts revolts adapted this phrase, which residents were used to hearing on the radio during their favorite R&B program. Shortly after, the motto came to be associated with the Black Panther Party, founded in Oakland in 1966 by Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale. Newton became one of the causes célèbres of the movement after his imprisonment in 1967 following a fatal skirmish with the police, and his image circulated throughout the world on a poster that showed him seated in an armchair with a rifle in one hand and an African spear in the other. In 1989 he was murdered by a drug dealer on an Oakland street, which perhaps saved him from the fate of Eldridge Cleaver, another charismatic Black Panther leader, who, after going into exile in Algeria and then Paris, became a born-again Christian and even ran for office as a member of the Republican Party.

But poor Newton (a name entirely fitting, considering his “revolutionary” tropism) suffered an even greater posthumous decline when his widow, with the foundation she instituted in memory of her late husband, decided to authorize the use of the original Black Panther logo and the words “Burn, baby! Burn!” for commercial use on a condiment bottle. The label for Burn Baby Burn, the “revolutionary hot sauce,” is rather successful, graphically speaking, promising us, against a red background suggesting flames, “a taste of the 1960s.” Don’t ask me why, but this all compels me to think about the visit Marcel Duchamp paid to Ken Price at his studio in Ventura, through the introduction of Walter Hopps.<sup>14</sup> The three men concluded their joyous encounter with a meal nearby, at Papa Tony’s Pizza. What choice would be better for a ceramicist?)

Let us turn for a moment to the motif of the car, which Price clearly liked to draw. For him it seems to be an object marked by a kind of *evil eye*. Often a car hurtles over the edge of a cliff-side road (*Car Plunge*, 1994) [p. 45]. Sometimes the vehicle bursts into flames, as mentioned above. Occasionally it’s used in a shooting (*Hollywood Drive-By*, 1996) [p. 50]. Circular vignettes from 1993, *L.A. Freeway* and *The One Ten* [pp. 42 and 43], remind us of the despair caused by traffic jams. The catastrophe of the automobile has undoubtedly grown over time, but the 1960s were still a seemingly happy period in this regard. In any case, that’s the feeling we’re left with upon viewing the 1969 calendar made by Joe Goode, *L.A. Artists in Their Cars* [fig. 14], which marks each month with the photograph of an artist in his vehicle. (The frontispiece shows an open freeway.) Ken Price, with black sunglasses and a Hollywood smile, appears in August; Larry Bell in February; Ed Ruscha (in whose oeuvre fire plays a remarkably important role, it should be noted) in March; John McCracken in October, and so on. Goode appears, on an optimistic note, with the month of January 1970. The history of artists’ group portraits has yet to be written, and one hopes that Goode’s multiple, from which there emanates a very “feel good” atmosphere, will receive the analysis it deserves. (Compare those thirteen debonair drivers with *Homage to Delacroix* by Henri Fantin-Latour or the New York “Irascibles” photograph published in *Life* magazine in 1951.)

Thinking back about Price and their friendship, Ruscha later recounted, “Around 1970–71 Ken Price and I drove across country from Los Angeles to New York in my wife’s 1961 Mercedes Benz 190 SL hard-top coupe with red leather interior. Kenny smoked big cigars constantly the entire distance. In Oklahoma we saw several motorcycle races and went to a circus with a sideshow featuring a tiny trailer that was home to a midget lady named ‘Princess Marguerita.’ We paid for our tickets to see her and saw that we were her only audience. Everything was in miniature, and our heads touched the ceiling. She came out and said, ‘Hello, I am Princess Marguerita, do you like my home?’ We were awestruck, and time stood still. We nodded, smiled, and headed for the door. Neither of us had ever seen anything quite like the princess. Even in the noise of New York City, where we saw lots of art and artists, we would continually reference our experience with Princess Marguerita. Years later, with the heavy smell of cigars never leaving the car, the experience with the princess never left our minds.”<sup>15</sup> Two born draftsmen united by the fragrant sfumato of Havanas and their encounter with a princess who has undoubtedly now been forgotten by the rest of the world — or almost. For me Ken Price’s work, with its joyously consoling character I’d like to emphasize in conclusion, will always retain something of that intriguing ambience.

*Translated from French by Molly Stevens*



Fig. 12  
*L.A. Riot (Car on T.V.)*, 1994  
Acrylic on paper  
13¾ x 10½ inches; 35 x 27 cm

Fig. 13  
Lee Friedlander  
*Florida*, 1963  
Gelatin silver print  
12¾ x 8½ inches; 32 x 22 cm







Fig. 14  
Joe Goode  
*L.A. Artists in Their Cars* (August: Ken Price), 1969  
Printed calendar  
13 pages, each 22½ x 15 inches; 57 x 38 cm

## NOTES

1. See primarily *Ken Price Sculpture: A Retrospective*, the catalogue of a major traveling exhibition organized by Stephanie Barron for the Los Angeles Country Museum of Art (Los Angeles and Munich: LACMA and DelMonico Books/Prestel, 2012), and the catalogue *Ken Price: Slow and Steady Wins the Race, Works on Paper 1962–2010* (New York: The Drawing Center, 2013), with an essay by the exhibition's curator, Douglas Dreishpoon. Both of these books are remarkable for their wealth of information and analysis.
2. E-mail from Ken Price in 2011 to MaLin Wilson-Powell, in the anthology she prepared, "Ken Price: Interviews and Writings, 1980–2011," *Ken Price Sculpture: A Retrospective*, op. cit., p. 208.
3. "Ken Price in Conversation with Vija Celmins," *Ken Price* (New York and Göttingen: Matthew Marks Gallery and Steidl, 2007), p. 9.
4. Barbara Rose's text for the 1970 brochure published by Gemini G.E.L. on the occasion of its printing of the *Figurine Cups* lithographs appears in *Ken Price Sculpture: A Retrospective*, op. cit., p. 267. (The cover of this brochure, its colored forms and counter-forms perpetuating the traditional analogy between the cup and the female breast, is reproduced on p. 227.) Rose makes an eloquent point about the process-based imagination at play in these works: "To realize the image of the figurine-cup, Price had Gemini build a life-size plaster cup modeled after his own ceramic cups. Then he photographed a nude model in the various motion stills shown in the prints. Developing, retouching, and hand coloring the photographs, Price prepared them to be transferred to the aluminum plates from which they were printed." The song "Loving Cup" appears on the Rolling Stones' 1972 album *Exile on Main Street*. It goes without saying that this metaphorical domain has been developed for a long time. In 1993 Mark Rosenthal asked Ken Price, "Is working with the one form, the cup, like being a musician who just plays the blues?" Price answered, "I just like the cup. I think it's a real kind of primal idiom. [...] When you use a cup, it's right in your hand, and you actually put it to your mouth and drink warm liquid from it. That is very primal, physical, and sensual, and is representative of sensual life. That's what the cups are about." (*Ken Price Sculpture: A Retrospective*, op. cit., p. 196).
5. Kristine McKenna, *The Ferus Gallery: A Place to Begin* (Göttingen: Steidl Publishers, 2009), p.79.
6. Donald Judd, "Specific Objects," *Arts Yearbook*, no. 8 (1965), republished in *Donald Judd: Complete Writings 1959–1975* (Halifax: The Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 1975), p. 181.
7. Ibid., p. 183.
8. "Don Judd: An Interview with John Coplans," *Don Judd* (Pasadena: Pasadena Art Museum, 1971), p. 25. Judd specifies, "I spent a lot of time determining where the trough should be on top of the box, having to do with it not being in any particular obvious spot. It couldn't occur across one of the quarters; it couldn't appear to occur at some definite, measured spot."
9. Gaston Bachelard, *The Psychoanalysis of Fire*, trans. Alan C. M. Ross (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968).
10. Paul Valéry, "De l'éminente dignité des arts du feu" (1930) in *Œuvres, volume II* (Paris: Gallimard/La Pléiade, 1960), p. 1243. And Bachelard echoes, "The conquest of the superfluous gives greater spiritual excitement than the conquest of the necessary. Man is a creation of desire, not a creation of need." (op. cit.).
11. This parallel is all the more subtle considering that the marvels of pyrotechnics enjoyed a clear chronological precedence over the aesthetic emotions caused by volcanic eruptions, incendiary art having already delighted Louis XIV and his court a century before. See on this subject Kevin Salatino's excellent book *Incendiary Art: The Representation of Fireworks in Early Modern Europe* (Los Angeles: The Getty Research Institute for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1997). André Félibien's texts, recounting the great fireworks at Versailles in 1668 and 1674, have recently been republished, with engravings by Jean Le Paultre and François Chauveau, in an edition by Michel Jeanneret, *Les Fêtes de Versailles* (Paris: Le Promeneur/Gallimard, 2012).
12. If I may, see my essay on this subject, "L'affiche en feu: Pour une esthétique psychédélique," in the catalogue *Off the Wall: Affiches Psychédéliques de San Francisco 1966–1969* (Paris and London: Les Arts décoratifs and Thames & Hudson, 2004), pp. 20–32. Moreover, Alex Kitnick, in his text on Price's final sculptures, speaks of "the psychedelic psoriasis of the late, blistered paint." See *Ken Price: The Large Sculptures* (New York: Matthew Marks Gallery, 2014), p. 17.
13. See Lee Friedlander, *The Little Screens* (San Francisco: Fraenkel Gallery, 2001), n.p. Walker Evans's text first appeared in *Harper's Bazaar* in February 1963.
14. Concerning this episode, which must have taken place in 1963, see Ken Price's 2005 statements to Douglas Dreishpoon in *Ken Price Sculpture: A Retrospective*, op. cit., p. 197.
15. Ed Ruscha, e-mail to the author on January 28, 2016. I extend heartfelt thanks to Ed Ruscha for sharing this memory in writing. At the moment these words were recorded, I found Ken Price ("Kenny Price," to be exact) and Ed Ruscha side by side in the "Dedication" that opens Eve Babitz's first book, *Eve's Hollywood* (1972) (republished in 2015 by New York Review Books).

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